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REASON

AND

REDEMPTION,

OR

THE GOSPEL AS IT ATTESTS ITSELF.

BY

ROBERT BAKER WHITE, D.D.

"

"THY WORD IS TRUTH."

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PREFATORY LETTER.

I HAVE only had time to read nine chapters of Rev. Dr. White's manuscript volume on "REASON AND REDEMPTION, or the Gospel as it Attests Itself." These chapters were selected somewhat at random, and yet not without some regard to the chain of argument and the unity of purpose as proposed in the author's Introduction. The style strikes me as fresh, easy, and simple, and yet strong and direct, free from heavy technicalities or unnecessary use of professional phrases, and rising sometimes to the sublime and eloquent in argument. While there is nothing, I believe, local or sectional or denominational in its terms, sentiments, or theological views,—for Dr. White is a truly catholic evangelical, contending only for the "faith once delivered to the saints,"—yet such is his position, and such are his antecedents and his reputation, that this volume, we may confidently expect, will meet with an extensive circulation, and, wherever it is read, we are persuaded it cannot fail to do good.

The forms of modern UNBELIEF, which are both widespread and exceedingly dangerous, are in many respects widely different from the unbelief of past ages. In many points they are peculiar, and differ from, and are yet more subtle and plausible than, the forms of unbelief that have prevailed for the last three hundred years, or, indeed, at any time since the death of Christ. A general resemblance may, indeed, be traced through them all from age to age; but each age has its peculiarities. In our day great modesty is professed, while the most daring presumption is on the lips. The highest mental culture and

the most sublime adoration for the works of the almighty Creator, and for the fine arts as expressions of the godlike genius that is in man, are the channels, or glosses, under which laws are made to dethrone the Lawmaker, and the personality and free agency of God and the distinctive and blessed character of God's "only Son our Lord" are either positively denied or undermined. In one thing only do the opposers of the gospel in our day seem to be agreed, and that is that they must command and use most vigorously all the appliances of art, letters, and science which distinguish our times in presenting new issues so as to change the mode of attack upon revelation. It is fairly a question whether or not Christian scholars and thinking men have yet fully considered this aspect of modern thought in its developments towards Christianity. May there not be in some considerable degree a necessity for a re-statement of Christian doctrines and for a new line of defense? Many of the old arguments, like the artillery and weapons of a past age, do not meet the necessities of our times. We must have *needle-guns*. And, besides, a large portion of our religious literature is totally useless, irrelevant to the new issues pressed upon our educated young people,—nay, worse than useless: it is a positive evil. There is a want of elegance, elevation, and refinement in the style, and a crudeness in the views and arrangements of thought, that render many of our Sunday-school books hurtful to the cause of truth. The necessity to which I am alluding for a *re-statement of Christian doctrines* does not arise from any new revelations made to us, or any new mental illuminations made in us, nor from an increase of light from tradition, or a more full understanding of the laws of the physical universe, nor from the greater use made of the elements for increasing man's material wealth, nor from modern progress in anything, nor from the discovery of new doctrines in Divine revelation that have hitherto remained hidden; but is owing chiefly to the style in which Christian doctrines have been

set forth, and to the kaleidoscopic views of error that fill the horizon of modern Christendom. The *protean* forms of error require manifold answers. And while it is true that the best way—the only true way—to *get darkness out is to let the light in*, still every age calls for its own literature. Every lake and ocean has its own coast and headlands: so every age has its own specialties. It is not given to any age to put fetters on those coming after it, although it is the law that each age laps over on its successor, as the old leaves on evergreens are always giving place to the new ones, and yet there is no naked or leafless period. One sows and another reaps; and in the sowing and reaping each age or period of the church's history has its own mission,—some great idea committed to it to keep pure or to propagate. So it was with the patriarchs, with Moses, the Hebrew kings and prophets. God called them to receive and keep pure a knowledge of his unity and spirituality. The world owes its theism to the Hebrews, and, as a part of this, Abraham's race was preserved to keep alive the hope of mankind in the promise of a Messiah to come. These dispensations were gradual, accumulative, and increasingly clear, until the fullness of time came, when God sent forth his Son. The age of the apostles was an age for the planting of the churches and for the *preaching* of the gospel,—the simple gospel of a crucified, dead, risen, and ascended Saviour, who reigns with God the Father as both "Lord and Christ." Next the canon of Holy Scripture had to be fixed, which required great learning and caution; and then *formulas* of sound words, embodying the precious faith of the church, had to be adopted, both for the purpose of denying errors imputed to the followers of Christ and correcting the false doctrines and foolish conceits of heretics, and also for teaching young disciples the articles of the true faith in a clear and comprehensive manner. Creeds, confessions, articles, and catechisms, and synods were necessary.

It is not true, then, that the Almighty has allowed any

of his dispensations to prove a failure. From Adam to Christ, every age had its faith, and there was a peculiar fitness or adaptedness in the forms of the faith and the teachers of that faith to the age and state of mankind then in the world. It is not true that the religion of Eden proved a failure, and then a new one was tried, and, when it failed, another and another, until now it is found that Christianity itself is a failure, and consequently a new revelation or another new phase of religion is about to appear. To say that God has *patched* up the religion of Moses and Christ until the world has so completely outgrown it that He must give us a new religion, as some of our learned men are now saying, is as false as it is blasphemous. It betrays an astonishing ignorance of mankind and of the human heart. Reason is the gift of God: so is common sense; and so are philosophy and revelation. And they are all in perfect harmony. When rightly understood and clearly interpreted, reason, revelation, and common sense all agree, at the cross of Christ, that his religion is the only religion for sinners, the only redemption for mankind possible,—just to God and man.

The necessity of salvation as it is offered from the cross of Christ is exceedingly well presented by Rev. Dr. White. From the extent of the field and the reach of the whole argument, it is impossible, of course, that every chapter should be exhaustive; yet there is a happy completeness in his mode of presenting redemption as the highest reason that cannot fail, I think, to interest every thoughtful reader.

The commentaries, dictionaries, and theological treatises of past ages, many of them, were valuable in their day, and are of great use to us; but every age calls for its own authors and preachers, just as each day demands its daily supply of bread,—not too old or worm-eaten, but fresh and thoroughly baked. I trust Dr. White's volume will meet with a wide circulation, and be greatly blessed by the Saviour of sinners to the promotion of his kingdom.

W. A. SCOTT.

INTRODUCTION.

It is the purpose of this volume to present an argument for the truth of the Christian religion. Many may imagine that no further reasoning on that subject is demanded in our country or day. It is true that the era has passed during which it was necessary constantly to defend the outworks of Christianity. Infidelity, once so arrogant and impious in her assertions and claims, and so violent in her assaults upon sacred truth, has been, again and again, met in the open field and vanquished with her own chosen weapon of argument. In lands nominally Christian, literature, science, and the arts have become the allies of our sacred faith; and skepticism now contents herself with mere whispers and insinuations, or becomes loud and clamorous only in the purlieus of vice. Hobbes, Hume, and Paine can be scarcely said to have any successors in the present day. Divine providence has, within the last century, furnished proof of the truth of the Christian religion, by signally showing, in the affairs of certain nations, its importance to the temporal welfare of mankind. It must be admitted that Christianity, in recent days, has achieved triumphs so numerous and vast, that it is no longer necessary to pursue the old line of her defense.

It were a mistake, however, to imagine that infidelity has been wholly driven from this or any other land. The number of her victims has doubtless been greatly diminished: but the wolf has only put on the clothing of the lamb; the enemy has only assumed a new form and a new

position, and adopted a different mode of attack. Once she attempted to storm the truth; now she endeavors to undermine it. She denies the existence of God, not directly, but really, by disavowing his personality and self-consciousness. She denies, not directly, but really, the immortality of the human soul, by affirming that it has only a brief phenomenal and not a substantial existence. She does not—as she did formerly—dispute the fact of inspiration, but questions the possibility of it. It is necessary for us, therefore, to re-examine, to re-arrange, and to republish the evidences of our holy religion. It may be well to meet the pantheist with metaphysical reasoning; but it is better to oppose him by such arguments as are adapted to influence at once the understanding and the conscience. The argument of this volume is aimed at skepticism and unbelief in every form.

Arguments for the Christian religion may be profitable to others besides avowed skeptics. It is probable that there will not be among our readers many who are prepared, openly, to disown that religion of Jesus which is so pervaded with holiness; which has conferred on us so many inestimable social enjoyments and civil securities; which has given the brightest adornment to the loveliest characters whom it has been our happiness to know, and which can alone alleviate the wretchedness of our present existence or throw one gleam of light on our pathway to a better and purer beyond it. But there may be some, into whose hands these pages will fall, who have secret doubts about the religion which they have been taught to venerate; and the thoughts which are here presented may be effective in preserving them from the yawning gulf of utter skepticism, into which they are in danger of descending. It is well for even matured Christians to examine the foundations of their trust. Thus they may be ready to resist every assault on it, by giving to every man who assails it a reason of the hope that is in them. There may

be hours, when the world, which so addresses our senses, may so fill up our imaginations, and our powerful and wily adversaries may make upon us such vigorous and artful assaults, that we may need the aid of argument to keep steady our trembling and vacillating faith. Even a speculative faith admits of degrees of vigor; and an advantage is gained whenever either a new argument is suggested or an old one recalled, which serves to preserve or increase it. We ought to catch at everything which may encourage our belief in a religion so pure, so sublime, and so beneficent as ours. It is a common opinion, that every exhibition of the evidences of the Christian religion affects only the understanding. This is so far from being true, that it has been discovered, in times of general religious interest, that discourses on the credibility of Christianity often produce the deepest conviction of sin and practical saving faith in the great Redeemer. Nor ought it to be questioned that arguments in behalf of the inspiration of our Scriptures have directly promoted the sanctification of believers.

It is time for us to state the specific design of the present volume, which is, to show that the plan of redemption unfolded in the Old and New Testaments attests itself. Having proved the Divinity of that plan, the conclusion will be irresistible, that the volume in which it is disclosed is inspired. If redemption be true, our whole religion is Divine.

Whether our effort be successful or not, this advantage will result from the discussion of our subject,—that it will bring before the minds of our readers the fundamental doctrines of that gospel, on which it becomes us at all times to meditate.

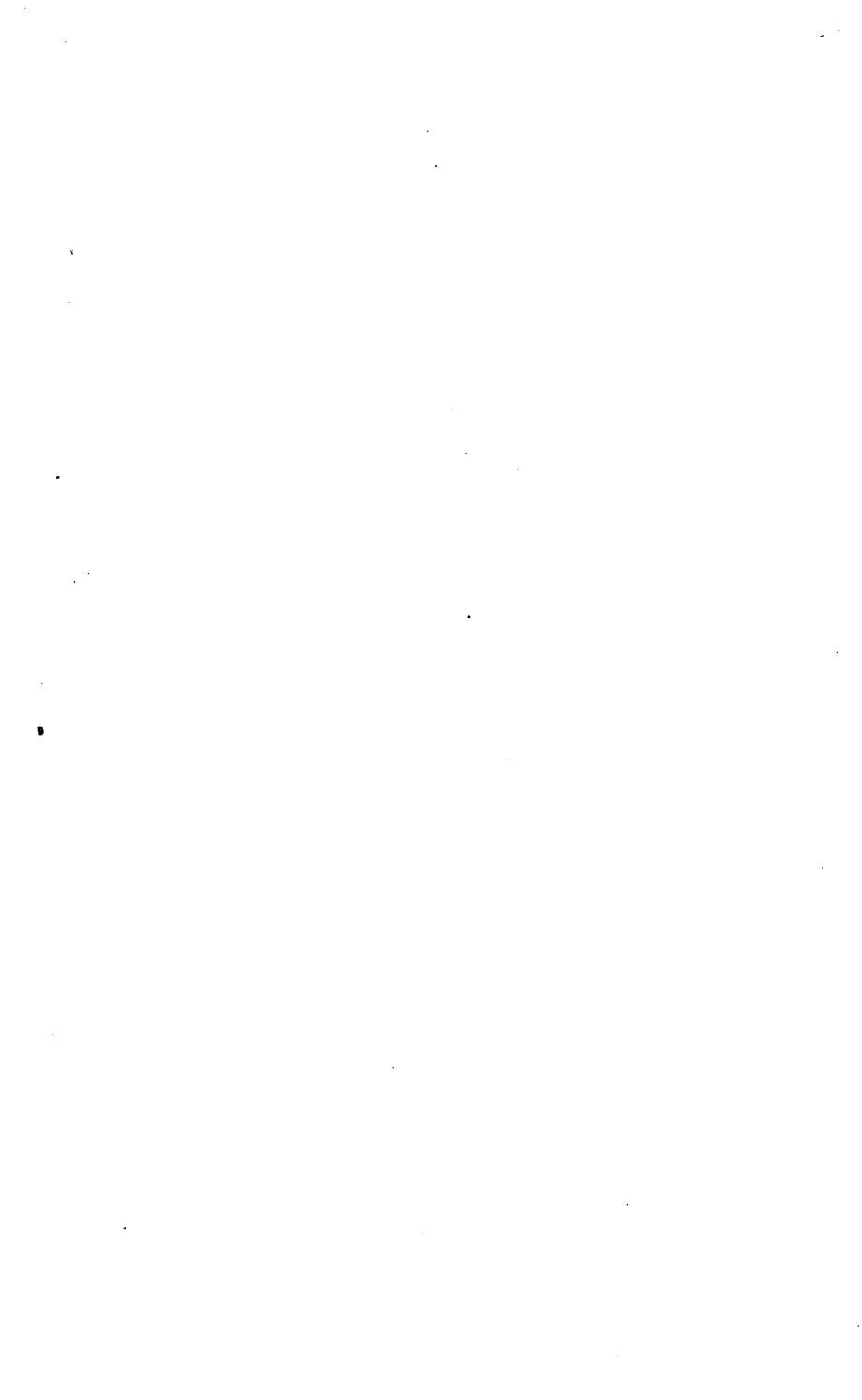
Our failure in our present attempt will detract nothing from the force of those other abundant and powerful evidences of the Christian religion, which are familiar to the minds of almost all men in Christian lands. It is not

necessary to the credibility of the scheme of redemption that it should possess a self-attesting power. We may, and we must, receive it on the direct authority of God, and because it is embraced in that book whose Divine authenticity is established by so many incontestable arguments. It might have been that the wondrous plan of mercy, so lofty, proceeding from the very summits of the Divinity, so unparalleled among God's works, would have been far removed above any earthly analogies with which to compare it; and that, on account of its very grandeur and vastness, it could have received no confirming response in the breast of a being so degraded in intellect and moral character as apostate man, or in the bosom of any finite being, however pure and exalted. And yet it cannot be supposed to detract aught from the immeasurable dignity of the saving scheme which the heaven of heavens cannot contain, that, like the moral law, it finds a response in human bosoms and reflects itself out on the universe from human hearts. It is a pleasing exhibition of the benevolence of the Deity that He has so formed us, and so framed his merciful plan, that no great learning or research or talent is necessary on our part for the discovery of its truth; but that it blazes out at once on the soul, so that the simple cottager, the Indian in his wigwam, and the negro in his hut may understand what that plan is, and that its origin is Divine, as well as he who has pondered the pages of Plato or handled the tomes of Aquinas.

In affirming that the gospel attests itself, it is meant that it does so to every one who is willing to contemplate it, but it must be admitted that it bears the clearest evidence of its supernal origin to him who is under the dominion of heavenly grace. It is he who has had the eyes of his understanding opened by the Spirit of the Lord, and has felt the power of redemption in imparting peace to his conscience and in renewing his moral nature, that feels, as other men cannot feel, that the gospel of his hope is broadly and

brightly enstamped with the Divine attestation. Let it also be borne in mind that in saying that the scheme of redemption attests itself, we mean that it does so in connection with what we know of God from the light of nature, and with what we have learned of human nature from experience; we mean that it attests itself without the aid of the testimony of miracles.

As to the originality of the argument presented, the reader must judge for himself. It is unreasonable to expect any other originality, on such a subject, than that which arises from a new combination of thoughts with which intelligent readers are already familiar.



REASON AND REDEMPTION.

CHAPTER I.

REDEMPTION NECESSARY TO THE PARDON OF MAN'S GUILT.

It is the design of this volume, as has been already stated, to prove that the gospel of Christ attests itself. The way may be opened for our positive argument by showing, first, as it is proposed to do in this chapter and the next, that redemption is rendered probable by the fact that it is a necessity to man's happiness. It is necessary to the preservation of the human race from an eternal ruin. No sooner is the scheme of mercy provided in the gospel made known, than the conscience affirms that it is indispensable to human salvation; and the more clearly this scheme is discovered, the more manifest becomes the perdition of men without it. Reason teaches us that men are lost without the gospel, makes no provision for the pardon of man's guilt, and offers no means for the renewal of his moral nature.

But why do we affirm that the necessity of redemption to man's happiness renders the fact of it probable? We infer the probability of a scheme of mercy from the infinite benevolence of God: the certainty of it cannot be inferred from that or any other Divine attribute. The probability of redemption we infer also from the universal persuasion

that some men do, after death, pass into an estate of eternal happiness. When it shall be made to appear to the reader that he is shut up to the idea of inevitable and universal perdition, without the gospel, we expect him to admit its heavenly origin.

The probability of the truth of the gospel arises from the fact of human guilt and sinfulness. The distinction between these is that guilt is liability to punishment from the hand of God, while sinfulness is the corruption of the soul itself. In man, unless forgiveness has been obtained at the cross, they are always conjoined; each implies the other. In proving, therefore, that men are guilty, we demonstrate their sinfulness, and, in showing that they are sinful, we prove their guilt.

Survey the testimony to human guilt and sinfulness, which reason, without the aid of revelation, affords us. It is clear, abundant, overwhelming. The sufferings of the human race must be regarded as a proof of its wickedness, when we consider the justice and benevolence of the Divine Being. The past history and the present condition of mankind prove the descent upon them of that Divine indignation which falls only on guilty moral agents.

The earth itself, marked all over by the retributive justice of God, is no appropriate dwelling-place for an innocent race. The disorders of physical nature show nothing more clearly than the punishment of men, and never would have been permitted had not human guilt been foreseen. Siroccos blow and volcanoes blaze with the Almighty's wrath against an apostate race. The blasting thunderbolt, as it falls, attests the depravity of man. The deadly miasma, which often floats amid scenes of surpassing beauty, and gives no warning of its approach, is a messenger from God for the punishment of human transgression. Death came by sin. Bodily diseases attest our depravity.

“ So in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of death,
More hideous than their queen ;
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every laboring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals reign.”

Although moderate labor is in man's present condition a source of enjoyment, the excessive toil, which is necessary to secure to a large proportion of our race the means of their subsistence, is a satisfactory proof of man's condemned condition. The mental sufferings of men, their anxieties, their jealousies, and disappointed hopes, prove the moral ruin as certainly as they prove the wretchedness of the race. War, so great an evil even to those who remain at home and escape its worst calamities,—so terrible an evil to those who are separated from their loved families and exposed to all the rigors of military discipline, to innumerable dangers, and to sudden death,—while it is the result of the selfishness and wicked passions of mankind, is also a punishment which the Infinite Hand inflicts on the human family.

The human conscience bears the most unequivocal testimony to human guilt and sinfulness; and on this testimony we place our chief reliance. Unfolding the law which has been written on the heart, and comparing the actions of men with that law, it pronounces a sentence of condemnation against the whole race. There has existed no man on earth, except One, who has never accused himself of moral evil. No people, however, have lived, so ignorant and so degraded as not to have perceived their guilt and moral corruption. Wherever you go,—to whatever continent, to whatever isle of the ocean,—you find men, however civilized or however rude, looking out for some method of propitiating the dread Deity whom they have consciously offended. You cannot efface from the bosom of man the deep conviction of his guilt. Reason teaches us alike that God has given a moral law, and that we have transgressed

it. In the history of any one whom you might select from all the generations of men, excepting only the Author of our holy religion, we might find ample evidence of the exercise of depraved dispositions, such as Heaven could not have originated and cannot approve.

Here the question arises, Is guilty and sinful man to find repose in the slumbers of the grave, or is man immortal? If man has no existence beyond the horizon of time, redemption is not necessary, to preserve him from any ruin that he greatly dreads. It were a work of supererogation to recapitulate the arguments which reason offers us for the immortality of the soul. Plato and Cicero, in their eloquent, and Butler, in his profound, reasonings on this subject, have shown that man's immortality is more than probable. The idea of immortality is one of the noblest that men have ever cherished, adapted to refine their intellectual and moral nature, and to elevate them above everything that is material and gross. It fortifies the soul amid temptations, and gives it solace in distress. Without it, the human mind could never have risen into the regions of lofty poetry, and human beings never would have been incited to heroic achievements. Annihilate this idea, and men would no longer regard each other with honor, human life would be held in little esteem, and mankind would sink to the level of those beasts of the field, whose existence they would then consider no less brief than their own. Were the hope of immortality destroyed, the idea of accountability to a Supreme Being could not survive, and men, no longer feeling themselves responsible to God, would lose all sense of justice, and indulge every passion without restraint, until society would be thrown into anarchy, and life itself would become an intolerable burden. The doctrine of immortality must be true, because the God of truth would not have made the harmony, the happiness, the very existence of society, and the existence of virtue itself in man, dependent on the belief of a lie. But this doctrine

must not be rejected, even if it could be established by no process of ratiocination; it requires no logical proof: the belief of it is instinctive. It has been received almost universally by men of all nations, in all ages, and by the most cultivated and the most barbarous alike.

“A voice within us speaks that startling word,
Man, thou shalt never die.”

If redemption be not true, man, guilty and immortal, must abide under perpetual condemnation and sink into endless ruin, *because, in that case, no provision has been made for his pardon.* Nothing but eternal perdition can be the fate of an immortal culprit. A being eternally condemned by the God who has given him existence, is forever lost.

No religion, except that of Christ, furnishes to sinful man a hope of forgiveness. We would vainly resort to any of the systems of paganism, ancient or modern, for the purpose of obtaining such a hope. We know that all those systems, whatever they may promise, are false,—the inventions of men: not one of them is a revelation from heaven. No one of them has furnished any atonement for sin; their costly sacrifices of brute and animal victims have only added cruelty to crime. It were absurd to look to the religion of Mahomet, as a means of obtaining the favor of Heaven. That religion is totally unworthy of our confidence. It is attested by no miracle, bears no internal evidence of a heavenly source, has accomplished far less than Christianity for the moral elevation of mankind, and has proved its earthly origin by its promises of a sensual heaven, by making its way only with the sword and marking its footsteps with human blood. If the Christian religion be renounced, every other pretended revelation from heaven must be rejected.

Nor do any of the systems of natural religion which philosophers have proposed to us furnish any rational and satisfactory hope of the pardon of human guilt. They may present to us noble, beautiful, and just representations of

many of God's attributes as well as of the moral law and man's moral accountability, but they point out to us no reasonable method by which Heaven's forfeited favor may be obtained. It has been said that nature teaches that, by repentance for the past and obedience in the future, guilty men may be reinstated in the Divine favor. We contend, however, that nature does not teach that repentance repairs past injuries and wrongs. By no repentance, however protracted or profound, can a man have restored to him the constitution or the estate which he has prodigally wasted. A leg or an arm, broken through recklessness, has never been by repentance restored to its original health and vigor. Repentance does not deliver, from the gallows or from prison, the man who has been condemned before his country's tribunal. If offenses by that means should go "unwhipped of justice," human law would be a nullity and a mockery. Whatever repentance may do towards securing the forgiveness of men, it is certain that there is nothing discoverable in the providence of God that would lead us to conclude that it alone secures *His* pardon. Besides, repentance for sin, as committed against the Divine Lawgiver, can have no existence, except so far as it is produced through the instrumentality of the gospel of Christ. We have no sufficient proof that any of the heathen have exercised a genuine repentance; or such repentance, if it has existed where the light of revelation has not shone, has been the result of redemption, and has been performed by those only whom Divine grace had prepared to receive the gospel on its first announcement. Real repentance must involve a reformation of the life and heart. The greatest of dramatists describes the King of Denmark as thus expressing his remorse:

"Forgive me my foul murder!
That cannot be; since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen."

True repentance weeps over sin as evil in itself and not merely over its consequences, renounces every wicked passion, aspires after and attains every holy affection,—and such repentance is a plant that lives and grows only in view of Calvary. Those sages of pagan antiquity, whose intellectual vigor and whose virtues are so much admired, were destitute of that thorough penitence which even reason teaches that a God of purity demands; much less then can we expect it from them who spurn the proffered aid of revelation. The repentance for violations of the Divine law, which is exercised by men independently of the grace which flows from redemption, is only remorse, which, so far from removing future punishment, is only the apprehension, the foretaste, and the proof of it. No other marks of the genuineness of repentance towards God have been demanded, in this reasoning, than those which are ever deemed necessary to indicate the sincerity of a repentance for offenses against human society and law.

It is also satisfactorily demonstrable, from the light of nature, that no future obedience of men can secure the pardon of their past transgressions. If it were possible for a man to turn from every course of iniquity and become as spotless as the cherubim before the everlasting throne, he could make no atonement for his sin. A future obedience can no more atone for a past transgression than a past obedience can justify a future offense. As well might Adam have pleaded, as a fit basis for his pardon, obedience rendered by him in Paradise before the fall, as men may now plead their future conformity to God's law as a ground of their forgiveness. No man's good works are sufficient for his acquittal at the tribunal of infinite justice, because they are outnumbered by his works of sin. And let not the fact be overlooked that one sin renders a man criminal before the eternal Judge. One sin exiled the human race from that abode of health and beauty which was its primal home, and entailed on man all those sorrows which, for a

period of six thousand years, he has been constantly enduring. Human courts and human laws furnish us with analogies which show that no man can demand a complete acquittal, against whom even one moral offense has been conclusively proved. The culprit, at the bar of his country, accused of the crime of treason, may have been a man of unsullied reputation for years; his services to his country may have won for him warm and wide applause; his past moral excellence may furnish a strong presumption of his present innocence: but, the fact of his treason once established, no past virtue, and no prospect of good deeds which he may yet perform, can secure him from the stern sentence of the law. No life had been more blameless than that of the scholar Eugene Aram, both before the period of his crime and afterwards, until the period of his arrest by the officer of the law, and he had, doubtless, exercised as true penitence for his offense as men ever cherish without the aid of supernatural grace; but the moment the murder of Clark was proved against him, he stood a convicted man, doomed to death. It is a principle of all law, human and Divine, that "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole"; he is a criminal, who has no claim either to acquittal or pardon. A murderer cannot hope to be either acquitted or pardoned on the ground that he is not a thief, nor a thief for the reason that he is not an incendiary. Every act of obedience to God which any man can do becomes due to the law as fast as he can perform it, so that he has nothing in advance with which to pay for any past delinquency.

Besides, men can perform no one work, that God accepts as good, except through the influence of the gospel of Christ. A good work is one in conformity to both the letter and the spirit of the Divine law, and is performed from the impulse of love to God with the purpose of obeying God's law, by one whose affections are, to some degree, habitually holy. It were unreasonable to expect the Deity to

recognize that as obedience to Himself which was not designed by the agent as such. History abounds with the recital of deeds denominated good, which were performed in ignorance of and without respect to the great redemption, uninfluenced by revelation and unprompted by the Spirit of God. What shall we say of the self-sacrifice of Codrus, of the zeal of Socrates for the moral improvement of his countrymen, the patriotism of Cincinnatus, the intrepid honesty of Regulus and Cato? *Splendida vitia!* says Augustine, of them all. Whether performed from the impulse of pride, or love of fame, or patriotism, or philanthropy, and whether selfish or disinterested, none of them were holy, because none of them were performed with reference to the glory of God. None but Christians really love the Divine Being even as nature reveals Him. If there be any exception to this general fact among the heathen, it can be accounted for only by supposing the special communication of Divine grace through the great atonement. But it is enough to show, that one moral offense excludes a man from the hope of Heaven's favor. For man, with his fettered and enfeebled moral faculties, to win his way to heaven by a moral obedience of his own, satisfactory to infinite purity, is a task utterly hopeless.

The religion of nature indeed, as it has been taught by the philosophers of the world and understood apart from revelation, does not include the idea of pardon. It regards mankind either as unfallen, or as retaining sufficient strength to attain salvation by a meritorious obedience. It is a religion suited to innocent man and not adapted to the fallen and guilty; or, at best, it is only fitted to act as a forerunner to that revealed religion which makes provision for restoring man to the happiness he has forfeited and the innocence and holiness he has lost. Like the science of astronomy, it applies to all worlds and is perfect in its proportions, but as little serves to render a revelation unnecessary as astronomy serves to render unnecessary those

sciences which deal with the masses and elements of the matter of the earth.

The opinion, entertained by some, that God will, without regard to merit or to an atonement, bestow salvation on all mankind, deserves a brief notice. We allude to this opinion only so far as it is professedly derived from the light of nature; so far as it is based on the Scriptures, it does not enter into our present discussion, which relates only to the necessity of redemption, as a means of securing man's salvation, and not to the extent of its results. It is not a little remarkable, when it is considered how pleasing and consolatory the doctrine of universal salvation, if cordially embraced, would be to the great majority of men, that the number of its advocates has never been large; a fact for which we can account only by supposing that it is opposed to the dictates of reason and conscience. If the consent of nations ought to have influence over our opinions, this doctrine must be rejected, since a belief in future punishment has existed and prevailed in all lands, from the earliest historic period to the present day. To imagine that men may pursue a career of cruelty, licentiousness, and fraud, to the grave, and then be admitted to abodes of celestial purity and bliss, and that without one penitential reflection, is altogether unreasonable, and in the highest degree unfriendly to virtue. That God will pardon all men, at the period of death, cannot be fairly inferred from anything that nature teaches us with respect to the Divine character. The argument against future punishment, drawn from the Divine benevolence, is altogether worthless, since it is entirely refuted by the sin, tears, groans, and death which have visited our earth; for if it be cruel to inflict suffering on men, the cruelty of such infliction is not removed by the brevity of it: the principle is the same, whatever the duration of its operation. So far from its being demonstrable without the light of revelation, that there is a Divine pardon for all, it cannot be proved, inde-

pendently of the gospel, that the Sovereign of the world will forgive any man; and if nature gives any hope on this subject, it does so, only by suggesting the idea of redemption.

When we contemplate the severity of the Divine holiness and the inflexibility of the Divine law, we see that human salvation is impossible without an atonement for human sin; nor can reason inform us how God can be a just God and yet a Saviour; and certainly reason never can be satisfied with any plan of salvation, except that which reconciles the Divine justice with the Divine mercy,—the plan which it could never have discovered, and only revelation makes known.

CHAPTER II.

REDEMPTION NECESSARY TO THE RENEWAL OF MAN'S MORAL NATURE.

IN the preceding chapter it has been shown that redemption is probable, because necessary to secure pardon to man. In this chapter shall be shown the probability of redemption, from the necessity of it as an agency in producing and promoting holiness in the human heart. After giving a brief outline of our argument, we shall proceed to consider it more in detail.

Mankind are depraved; their depravity is the source of their wretchedness; they grow in depravity during the whole duration of their being, and become more wretched as they become more depraved: consequently their eternal ruin is inevitable, unless some provision has been made for their sanctification; and no such provision has been made, except in the gospel of Christ. Reason, therefore, may be said to assure us that, unless redemption be true, all must perish.

It has already been asserted that human nature is depraved; we now affirm its total depravity. All the pride

of the human heart rises in rebellion against this truth ; it can, nevertheless, be demonstrated without the aid of that written revelation which declares it in a way so pointed and explicit. To prove the total depravity of man, it is not necessary to read the long and black catalogue of human sins which history furnishes ; it is enough for us to know that love to God is no longer native to the human heart. Alienation from God, indifference to his glory, and an absence of all desire to return to Him, afford conclusive proof that the human heart has become a moral desolation. The temple of the soul lies in ruins, though its broken columns, and shattered arches, and decaying windows may indicate that it is a place where God once was worshiped. As Howe has said, there is enough remaining in the soul to show that God once dwelt in it,—full enough to prove that He has retired and gone. The idolatry, which has prevailed among the nations, is itself sufficient evidence that the world of mankind have become estranged from God. Even in children we discover an aversion to the holiness of the Divine nature, except in those rare cases in which, beneath the sweet light of the cross, renewing grace had been dispensed to the soul, in the days of childhood. It is vain to tell us of the amiable dispositions of some men,—of their deeds of charity,—of their undeviating rectitude in all the ordinary business of life ; the total depravity of men must stand confessed, so long as men themselves are conscious of their estrangement from God.

It ought to be admitted, that the sinfulness of men is the source of their ruin. Nothing is more reasonable than that sin and misery should be constantly conjoined in the government of a holy God. Departure from God must incur his displeasure ; as the separation from the fountain of truth, purity, and happiness, it necessarily involves the soul in sorrow and gloom. Experience has taught us that the Divine law is as certainly the rule of happiness as it is the standard of duty. Not only are men miserable because

they are sinful, but usually the degree of their misery is in the direct ratio of the degree of their sinfulness. We expect to find that man the most miserable, who has, for a long time, cherished the worst passions and committed the worst sins. In our prisons there exists a greater amount of wretchedness than in other human habitations, not only on account of their physical discomfort, but because there is found in them a deeper depravity, which spreads around the convicts a thicker gloom than is caused by the absence of the sunlight. Men usually become more miserable as life advances, not because the world loses its novelty, or health declines, or friends depart,—not because the world withholds from them any of its accustomed means of enjoyment,—but because, with the lapse of years, they grow in wickedness. The period of childhood is often reverted to as a period of happiness, because it was a period of innocence. Childhood's happiness is only partial, as its innocence is only comparative; yet, many whom sin has made wretched look back to their early life as a scene of almost unmingled happiness, and with much of the regret with which we imagine that our first parents looked back to the Paradise from which they had been exiled. So fully have moralists discussed the subject of the disastrous influence of sin on human happiness, that we need reason no further on it with those who recognize human beings as the subjects of a moral law. It deserves to be considered that it is on account of the brevity of human life, that the proportion between moral pravity and misery is not more manifest.

Men, unrenewed and unrestrained by that grace which flows from redemption, become worse and worse. Vicious men, when uninfluenced by the gospel, sometimes indeed reform externally, but experience no reformation of the heart. However some of the evil passions of a man's nature may seem to lose their strength, and however his amiable dispositions may seem to be developed, in the progress of years that aversion to God, which lies at the

base of his misery, only becomes intensified, and never abates until living Christianity assumes its empire over his affections. The distance which separates the unrenewed man from God ever widens as he advances from infancy to the grave. Nor is this progress in sin inconsistent with the idea of total depravity, since a man may be entirely destitute of the love of God, and yet not as bad as he is capable of becoming, his positive enmity to the infinitely Holy One admitting of increase through an indefinite duration.

If unrenewed men become worse and worse during their residence on earth, it must be believed, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that they will become worse and worse in eternity. In the eternal world, wicked men will grow rapidly in depravity. On their removal from the earth, their moral distance from God will be at once greatly increased. It is reasonable to suppose, apart from what revelation has taught us on the subject, that their companions will be only the wicked; and our experience has sufficiently convinced us of the corrupting influence of evil associations. Finding their sin unremoved and their sufferings unmitigated by change of place, they will soon understand that they are cast away forever from God, and deeming their condition hopeless, they will become reckless as to their moral conduct and character. But their misery, according to a law of their nature, already indicated, will increase as rapidly as their depravity. Both will exist and increase eternally. If wicked men should not be destined to become worse in a future world, there is enough to alarm them in the thought of the perpetuity of their present degree of wickedness. But unregenerate men, wherever they reside, make progress in sin. Were the gospel removed from the world, and man left immortal on the earth, not many ages would elapse before the world would become a hell; man's developed depravity would render it a scene of unmitigated torment. Ungodly men,

who are refusing the benefits of redemption, and yet wishing to be immortal, are only desiring for themselves an interminable perdition.

An expectation of the future happiness of mankind has been based on the opinion that death will effect a radical moral change in the human soul, an opinion which can be sustained by no satisfactory evidence or argument. Death will, doubtless, make important changes in the relations and circumstances of the spirit of man; a vast change must occur, when the immaterial part of man shall lay aside the outward machinery through which it has been accustomed to act, and begin to think, feel, and carry on its communications with physical nature without the intervention of a material agency; but such a change will not alter the qualities of the soul, which shall survive the dissolution of its earthly tenement with unaltered and unimpaired powers. It will no more be changed by laying aside an instrument which it has used, than the moral character of a man is altered in this life by his simply having wrested from his hand a tool or weapon which he has been accustomed to employ. It has been imagined that the infirmities and depravity of the human soul have originated from its connection with the body, and must necessarily pass away when that connection shall be dissolved. Sin, however, had its origin, not in the body but the soul, and the body has become an agent of temptation, only in consequence of the previous infirmities of the spirit to which it is allied. Moral evil commenced, not in a bodily appetite, but in criminal curiosity, and a vain desire to be wise above the assigned limits of human knowledge: it originated in man in the same way as in those higher spirits, who were not surrounded by gross material structures, if corporeity can be ascribed to them at all. The body never could have become a minister to sin had not the heart first become perverted. Taking man as we find him, and granting that the body may confirm and increase the corruptions of the

soul, the question occurs, Has he no other sources of moral corruption? May not the spirit become depraved by its own independent action? Man has passions as well as appetites: he may be proud as well as gluttonous, revengeful as well as lascivious, deceitful as well as intemperate; his hatred to his neighbors and to his God cannot be justly said to have their spring only in the appetites of his body. It is evident that, if human beings had no appetites, they would still be tempted to pride, ambition, malevolence, and impiety,—perhaps the more so, since the wants of the body are adapted to teach them sympathy with their fellow-creatures, and dependence on their God. If, after death, the appetites, with all their effects, are to be removed, the passions, which are sufficient to corrupt the soul, will survive. The effects of man's appetites, however, shall continue after death, although the appetites themselves may perish; for the removal of causes does not imply, necessarily, the removal of their effects. Those passions which belong immediately to the soul, and which shall survive and act with greater intensity in eternity, will insure the future wretchedness of the unrenewed soul. It is unphilosophic to suppose that the human soul can be purified by a mere separation from the body, or even by its translation to the holiest scenes of the universe.

The opinion that the character of the wicked will be changed by future punishment is wholly untenable. Afflictions do indeed, under a system of grace, promote sanctification in the soul, but they possess no inherent or necessary efficacy in securing such a result. Sufferings in this world, so far from making wicked men virtuous, often only embitter them against God, and lash their worst passions into madness. Surely, it has been ever found that extreme poverty is apt to be in alliance with moral degradation.

The hope that men can be educated to holiness without the gospel is altogether vain. If man has in his heart no

germ of holiness, no mere education can render him holy: it is the office of education to develop that which already exists in human nature, not to implant in it anything new. The effects of education are vast and vastly beneficial; through its influences the human understanding may be advanced and expanded, so as to reach and take in the laws of the material universe, embrace the truths of natural religion, and learn with accuracy the theory of the gospel; it may be so conducted as to secure to men, even without the aid of revelation, what may be called moral improvement; at least, it may deter from some evil principles and pernicious practices. But one thing mere education has never effected: it has never shed abroad the love of God through the heart of apostate man. The human taste may be educated so as to derive an exquisite pleasure from field and forest and the firmament above, from the artistic products of human genius, and from those sacred Scriptures which possess a beauty beyond that of the serenest sky, or the loveliest landscape, or the most finished earthly literature; and so as to perceive a beauty in the outward forms of religion, and even in that personal piety which spreads a charm over families and society at large. A refined and cultivated taste may be favorable to good morals, and even promotive of piety in the soul, when sanctified by the presence of the Holy Spirit. But the perception of beauty is not holiness; and unsanctified taste, however cultivated, is dissociated from the very semblance of piety. Athens, a city most distinguished for its appreciation of all that is beautiful, was in no way remarkable for the purity of its morals, and was wholly given to idolatry. The human conscience may be so educated as not only to perceive but approve the right; but no education of the conscience has ever kindled one spark of affection for God, on the cold altar of the human heart. An education of any part of man's nature, effected through merely natural means, however it may fit men for higher useful

ness and enjoyment in this world, cannot prepare them for the ministries and associations of heaven.

It has been shown that a state of guilt is a state of ruin, and that perpetuated sin is perpetuated misery. It has also been shown that the regeneration of the soul is indispensable to its attaining holiness. Now, we affirm that nature makes no provision for the regeneration of the soul. Even if nature furnished a hope of it, that hope would be worthless, until the method of it was disclosed. No religious system, except Christianity, has ever proposed regeneration as one of its ends; and, certainly, no other religion has provided the means of the moral renewal of man. To expect a radical change of the moral nature by means of paganism or Mohammedanism were consummate folly. Philosophy has neither provided nor proposed any means of regeneration. If, therefore, the gospel should prove itself inadequate to the work of man's moral renewal, all hope of human salvation is gone. Indeed, no religion could raise men into newness of life, except one which, like Christianity, discloses an adequate atonement for human sin.

The gospel does propose to effect that regeneration which has been proved to be so indispensable to men. The Divine Author of our religion taught both the necessity and the possibility of it. "He came to purify to himself a people." He has actually "quickened" those who were "dead in trespasses and sins." The atonement which He accomplished, through a sea of suffering, was only subordinate and subservient to the sanctification of his people. Truth, fresh from heaven, is the proposed instrumentality of man's spiritual improvement: the agent of its power is the Holy Spirit. No power but that which created the soul at first is equal to the work of its regeneration. Coming to man in his exigency, and proposing to accomplish for him a thing so necessary as his moral renewal, and offering the apparently sufficient means of it, the gospel is altogether

probable. Enough, at least, has been said to induce us to wish Christianity to be true: if reason teaches the eternal perdition of men, we naturally turn to the gospel for relief.

CHAPTER III.

REDEMPTION ATTESTS ITS DIVINITY BY ITS CORRESPONDENCE WITH NATURE.

REDEMPTION attests its divinity by its harmony and correspondence with nature itself. There are maps composed of different pieces of wood, on which are printed countries with their rivers, mountains, and cities, and which, when combined, present an apparently unbroken surface: just as we can tell that one of these wooden pieces is a necessary part of the whole map, may we determine that the gospel is an indispensable part of the plan of universal providence, from its nice adjustment to the rest of it. The scheme of salvation remarkably corresponds with the physical condition of the world, with man's moral and social condition, and with many religious opinions which we may regard as natural to men, because they have prevailed in all ages and countries. The correspondence to which we allude could not have been the result of chance, and the man must be bold indeed who would affirm that it is the effect of any human design.

We would throw around the atonement all the light we can gather,—although some of that light come to us, faint as twilight, from the obscure regions of heathenism. It is not a thing incredible that nature, which declares so plainly the glory of God, should point also to the glories of the Son of God; and it is certainly consoling to reflect that human superstitions and false religious creeds may be made

subservient to our sacred Christianity, both in illustrating its nature and in establishing its credibility.

In showing—as we propose to do in the progress of our reasoning—that the Divine mercy may be learned by the light of nature, we are not contradicting anything which has been said in the previous chapters of this work. Reason teaches that men are lost without an atonement, but at the same time gives intimation that mercy will be exercised towards them in some way consistent with the demands of justice: in the opinions just expressed there is no inconsistency. Unaided reason, even in the most favorable circumstances, never could have discovered the real atonement; but reason bears testimony to it, since it has been supernaturally disclosed; just as, in the estimation of certain theologians, the natural attributes of God, once suggested by revelation, receive abundant proof from the light of nature, although reason alone could never have discovered them; just as, in natural science, there are many truths which only the genius of Galileo or Newton could have made known, but which, since science has revealed them, every man is able to verify.

Many suppose that to resort to reason for confirmation of the gospel is to disparage revelation. With these persons the inspired writers have no sympathy; on the contrary, we find them using such language as this, “The heavens declare the glory of God,” “Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons,” “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.”

We affirm that redemption is the necessary complement of nature, and that, being so, it is Divine. It is easy to see that the gospel corresponds with the condition of the world. Man in this life is not in a state suited to an innocent race, nor is he in a state suited to a race hope-

lessly lost. Consider the condition of physical nature around us. In a previous chapter its disorders have been referred to for the purpose of proving that man is guilty and condemned; all these disorders being visitations of Divine vengeance, not on the unconscious earth, but on man, the sensitive and conscious inhabitant of it. On the other hand, we may perceive most valuable blessings bestowed on man through the medium of physical nature, so that it cannot be said that unmingled wretchedness is his heritage. Blessings crowd the earth and beam from the firmament. There is sunlight, and moonlight, and starlight; there is the variety of the seasons,—vernal gayety and autumnal calmness; there is the grass that carpets our fields; there are the trees, so full of grace or majesty, which whisper a thousand different songs to the passing gale; there are the flowers, the images of hope and mercy; there are the birds that glitter in their plumage, and sing as cheerfully and as sweetly as though they had just been let loose from Eden, and were fit to return to it again; there are the fruits and vegetables and grain, which abound in every clime and land; and there is the glow of bodily health,—man's nature has been endowed with such sensibility as enables him to derive from the beauties and bounties of nature an exquisite satisfaction.

Physical blessings have been spoken of, but it falls in with the line of our argument to inquire into the other and higher sources of and facilities for happiness which man possesses. In the exercise of his mental faculties, and in the glow of his affections, he finds real enjoyment; in his natural relationships, from a mother's smile, from a sister's caresses, from the paternal benediction, he receives the sincerest pleasure. On this earth, perhaps in every part of it, there are happy homes. Nor is our general argument weakened by the fact that in heathen lands there is least of domestic comfort and of the sweet charities of life. Not only is the earth most beautiful and bountiful in lands of

the most degraded idolatry, but there is a pleasing flow of the affections among those inhabitants of the earth whom superstition has degraded. In heathen lands, boys have their pastimes, and mothers are often gentle, and fathers are often kind, and nature's gifts, though abused, are visible, and their power to administer enjoyment is felt.

They who deny the superintending providence of God may be disposed to affirm that all man's resources of enjoyment are the result of accident, or the consequence of universal laws which execute themselves without the Divine direction. With such persons it is vain to reason on any religious topic; they ignore religion, deny the moral accountability of man, and lose sight of the moral character of the Ruler of the universe. We must believe that God is not indifferent to the condition of his creatures, and that He necessarily carries into operation the laws of nature, since those laws possess no intelligence and no inherent power. Having a moral government to administer, the Sovereign of the world directs the action of nature's laws, whatever their inherent power, so as to attain the ends of justice and reflect the rectitude of his character. He has furnished the earth and instituted the relationships of human life, binding round the heart the ties of parental, filial, and conjugal love, as really as He has placed the sun in its orbit, or rolls the earth on its axis. To affirm that God could not withhold enjoyment from man is to deny his power of punishing the guilty; and to say that He grants blessings, without noticing or caring for human guilt, is to affirm that He is indifferent to the moral conduct of his creatures.

There are some who regard man's condition in the world as only reconcilable with a state of present probation as to the moral law. They say that such a commingling of joy and sorrow, as we witness on earth, could exist only in the case of beings who had sinned, but against whom sentence of condemnation had not gone forth. It is sufficient for

the overthrow of this opinion, to consider that a single offense against the Divine law must terminate man's probation with respect to it. One transgression dissolves the covenant of works. If man has sinned, there is no reason for delaying his condemnation a single day, since the evidence of his guilt is completely in the possession of the Divine tribunal. Besides, if man were in a state of probation to the moral law, there were no propriety in inflicting upon him such evils as he now experiences, or any evils whatever ; his punishment ought to be delayed until his probation has ended. Man is, however, already accursed, and a state of condemnation is incompatible with a state of legal probation.

The opinion, that man's probation to the law having terminated he now receives the full punishment of his sin, cannot be maintained ; and there are those, let it be remembered, who contend that it is not necessary to imagine that mercy has interposed to arrest the full execution of Divine law, since men now endure an adequate penalty for all their offenses. Men universally look forward to a judgment to come, and tremble at the prospect of an interview with God, because they are persuaded that their sin receives in this world no sufficient punishment. The calamities of this life, severe as they are, do not seem to constitute a complete retribution for that enormous guilt which man has incurred in the ruin of his once noble, moral nature, in offering dishonor to a law of infinite sanctity, and in hurling defiance at the everlasting sovereignty ; even if conscience did not point its threatening finger to a coming retribution beyond the frontiers of time.

It has been shown that man possesses many comforts and sources of happiness, and that these are possessed by him not in consequence of the Divine indifference, not from the fact of his being in probation to the law, and not because they are consistent with his now receiving all the punishment that he deserves. It follows, of course, that these com-

forts and sources of happiness are granted through the mere mercy of God. Mercy is a word generally used to signify pity to the miserable ; we use it, however, as synonymous with the word grace, and as signifying favor to the undeserving. The angels of heaven, being holy, receive their blessings through the Divine goodness ; man, being guilty, receives his through the Divine mercy. Every ray of light that shines on men, every drop of rain that falls to fertilize their fields, every stream, indeed, that gurgles from the hill-side, every flower that blooms in the valleys, every leaf that trembles in the forest, every nutritious fruit or grain on earth, and every human smile, is full of the mercy of the Lord. Man's deep depravity proves that all his present enjoyments proceed from Heaven's mercy : blessings such as these cannot be deserved by the guilty and the corrupt, and can have no other source. It is unreasonable to say that man is partially sinful, and therefore experiences calamities, but that he is also partially holy, and therefore receives blessings ; the present aspect of the world cannot be accounted for on the hypothesis of a mixed moral nature in man : that can exist only in the case of the convalescence of a regenerated soul under a system of Divine grace. That man reasons strangely who, viewing man's ungodliness, can cast an eye over the bright and varied blessings of the earth, and yet say that man deserves all or any of them, or that Divine mercy is not the source of them all. We can fully account for the mingling of enjoyment and misery witnessed in the world, by supposing that God has placed the human race under a system of mercy, and granted to it a respite from punishment ; and we can account for it in no other way.

There is another argument which proves that Divine mercy has been exercised towards the human race. That cry to heaven for mercy, which has been heard so constantly from our earth, not only from those favored portions of it, in which Christianity has uttered her voice, but from

those to whose dark recesses the light of revealed religion has never penetrated, indicates to us that there is mercy for man in the bosom of the Most High. This universal expectation of mercy is a striking correspondence with the gospel of Christ.

Here let the mind be fixed distinctly on the truth, that if reason alone declares that God is merciful to man reason also requires a belief in redemption. That reason does require a belief in redemption is the point to which we have been endeavoring to conduct the reader, by the foregoing reasoning of this chapter. It is unreasonable to suppose that God has shown favor to the guilty, without an atonement. The Divine character, even as nature makes it known to us, is so inflexibly holy that in all cases it demands the full punishment of sin. The Divine justice could never treat as innocent, or as slightly guilty, the being who had broken the whole moral law, unless satisfaction had been made to it. God's veracity requires that sinners should be completely miserable, in the absence of an atonement for their sin; since He has pledged his word, in giving even the law of nature, that it should be fully executed. The law is forever dishonored if the violators of it can receive the largest Divine favors without offering some satisfaction to its offended sanctity. It is also manifest that the satisfaction spoken of has not been exacted from man himself, who is wholly unable to render it: to exhaust the penalty of their sin would cost human beings utter and eternal ruin. Reason, rightly consulted, may be said then to teach us that a satisfaction has been made for human sin, and that by some other being than man himself, and thus points us to redemption. Reason never could have provided the atonement, never could have suggested it, never could have discovered how or by whom it has been provided; but reason does bear testimony to the Divine origin of redemption, by declaring some satisfaction for human sin to be necessary, to account for man's present condition in the world.

Redemption is attested by certain religious opinions, which may be considered natural, because they have existed in all countries and ages: it has a correspondence with those opinions.

We know how widely paganism has prevailed among men; it has been universal. Paganism, corrupt and imperfect as it has been, originated from the conscious necessities of benighted men, and may be regarded, to a degree, as the voice of nature itself; it contains truth, which even the philosophers of the world have failed to discover or suggest. Some have asserted that polytheism has resulted from pantheistic ideas, that men have worshiped heroes, stars, groves, and statues because they regarded these as parts or phenomena of the Deity, the only substance of the universe. It is far more probable that polytheism resulted from man's felt need of mediation with God. Afraid to approach the Supreme Being directly, men sought the intercession of inferior beings, to whom they rendered worship. Not only have mankind over the whole earth sought a mediator between themselves and the Supreme Potentate, but they have generally felt that their mediator or mediators ought to possess some of the attributes of the Divinity. Paganism, in its longing for intercession with God, may be justly regarded as pointing to Christ, the only real mediator between God and man. This cry for mediation from heathen temples, protracted through so many ages, shows a correspondence between the natural belief and desires of men and the gospel of Jesus: it furnishes an argument for the credibility of that gospel.

It is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of human nature that men of all generations, races, and climes, and of all degrees of culture, from the grossest African barbarism to the highest Grecian civilization, have recognized the fact of propitiation through blood. Altars, wet with the warm blood of brute or human victims, have smoked in every country under heaven. Among many

nations, the custom of offering animal sacrifices has prevailed, during the whole period of their recorded history, and at the present day this custom is observed by the larger portion of the world's inhabitants. In America, when first discovered, separated as it was from the rest of the world by wide oceans, altars to God were found, covered with offerings of blood. The sacrifices of the heathen were, and are, manifestly designed to be vicarious and piacular. They could have been intended for no other purpose. We have the written volumes of two of the most distinguished nations of heathen antiquity; and in the languages of both these the words, used in reference to their sacrifices, convey the idea of propitiation. Justin says that "the Carthaginians (also) sacrificed men on their altars, that they might obtain peace with their gods by their blood." The question is, Whence originated this custom, among the heathen, of offering animal sacrifices? It is generally supposed to have come by tradition from a Divine revelation made to man at an early period of the world. The correspondence of the gospel with this tradition is not a little remarkable. That it was told at the beginning of the world and believed by all nations, that by the shedding of blood there is remission of sins, is well accounted for by the gospel, and admits of no solution without it. It would seem to us that reason, unenlightened by revelation, would never accept the idea of propitiation through blood; but when we find all men actually accepting it, we must believe that somehow it is congenial to human nature, and from the congeniality indicated we derive evidence of its truth. It may be, despite the opinion that animal sacrifices are abhorrent to reason, that the custom of which we speak had its origin, not in tradition, but in human reason or instinct, speaking under the impulse of a strong necessity. Our argument, however, is not affected by the origin of the idea of propitiation through blood, whether it came by tradition or through reason; we know how fully the gospel corresponds

with it, and we discover in this correspondence evidence of the truth of redemption.

We have affirmed that without a revelation no human mind could have understood the scheme of redemption in its details; but we think that it ought to be accepted as that which fits in completely with the condition and wants of our race, and for which men have been unconsciously longing. Kepler, the great astronomer, unable to reconcile the actual condition of the planetary system with any of his theories, suggested, long ago, that an invisible planet existed between Mars and Jupiter, and his conjecture has been substantially confirmed by subsequent discoveries. So the existence of a hidden truth has been necessary to account for the moral orbit of our earth, which else had wandered into the blackness of darkness forever. That hidden truth human science could never discover, but Divine revelation has at length made known,—the gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

REDEMPTION ATTESTS ITS DIVINITY BY THE MANNER IN WHICH IT
DISCLOSES ITSELF IN THE BIBLE.

REDEMPTION attests its Divine origin, by the manner in which it discloses itself in the Bible. A story may possess such a degree of verisimilitude that no one can be justified in doubting its truth. The scheme of salvation, revealed obscurely at the beginning of the world, becomes brighter and brighter, until the atonement is consummated in the sufferings of the Son of God on the cross: when we observe the gradual unfolding of this scheme until it becomes fully displayed, we are persuaded that its origin is heavenly. We have read nothing like this narrative of redemption

before, and we can test it by no other narratives; but there is something in our judgments and consciences that forbids us to discredit what is so candidly told with such perseverance of utterance. There is a correspondence between the Scriptures of the Old Testament and those of the New, and between the different portions of the entire Bible, that affords an argument for the truth of redemption, which no candid understanding can resist. Redemption, like a golden thread, runs through all the Scriptures, binding them into unity. The consistency with which the plan of salvation has been taught by many different writers of different generations is such as has never been maintained except in the utterance of truth, and cannot be reconciled with the utterance of falsehood. Even if there had been collusion among the writers, such consistency could not have been preserved for so long a period. There could have been no collusion among them, separated as they were from each other by such distances of time. Men have sometimes intentionally concurred for the purpose of imposing on the credulity of mankind; but who ever heard of men of different generations, and for the period of four thousand years, colluding together with a view to deceive the world? The thing is incredible and impossible. We find one inspired writer giving one truth in relation to redemption, and another giving another truth, unconsciously or without perceiving the connection of these truths; and we can perceive what the writers themselves could not see, the harmony of them all. This unconscious agreement cannot be accounted for, except on the theory of the inspiration of the writers. If men were to bring from different parts of the earth hewn stones that precisely fitted one another, so as to be combined in rearing a beautiful and well-proportioned structure, and if it were shown that they had no purpose in their respective works, the conclusion would be inevitable that they acted under the direction of some other mind. And when we see the writers of the Old and New

Testaments bringing together the materials from which the narrative of redemption is formed, we conclude that they have all been acting under the control of the infinite intellect.

The word *redemption*, as used in this chapter and generally throughout this volume, expresses the whole gospel, and not simply the fact that Christ has become a ransom for men; it includes the ideas of human guilt, sinfulness, helplessness, and need; all these ideas the fact of redemption, necessarily, implies.

Throughout the entire Scriptures we find a consistent teaching on the subject of man's guilt and moral corruption, without which, let it be considered, an atonement would have been unnecessary. The volume which we regard as sacred commences with an account of man's fall from an estate of moral rectitude: he is represented as becoming, soon after the period of his creation, a rebel against Divine authority, a transgressor of the Divine law, and an outcast from the Divine favor. At a very early period of human history, a writer, claiming inspiration, declares of man that "the imagination of the thoughts of his heart" is "only evil, and that continually," thus affirming the total depravity of the apostate race. The great psalmist of Israel represents the omniscient God as looking with a glance of earnest scrutiny over the earth to see if there were any that did good, and as finding that all had gone out of the way, and that there were "none that doeth good, no, not one." Neither Moses, nor Job, nor David, nor Isaiah, not one of the prophets, has given us, in all his eloquent writings, any swelling descriptions of the dignity and excellence of human nature, such as may be found in the writings of classic antiquity; but all of them weep over it as a broken, prostrate, and perverted thing. When we turn to the New Testament, we find man's sinfulness as fully delineated there. When the Saviour told the Pharisees, who were not worse than most other men, "I

know you, that ye have not the love of God in you," He meant only to represent the general condition of unregenerate human nature. Christ told his disciples that the Holy Spirit, who, on his own departure from it, would descend into the world, was coming to "reprove the world of sin." How forcibly the corruption of human nature is taught in these words of Christ, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"! The general teachings of Jesus show us, in a manner adapted to touch our hearts, that human beings have become far estranged from God, liable to particular vices, subject to the devices of Satan, and reluctant to be reconciled to the infinite Father, who solicits their return to Himself. Christ's apostles have also made mournful and fearful statements of the apostasy of human nature, as, for example, Paul, in his description of the heathen world, and when he represented Christians as having been "by nature the children of wrath." The writers of the sacred Scriptures were men of different degrees of intellectual culture, surrounded by different moral influences, and subject to different prejudices; and the consistency of their teaching, so little to have been expected, on the one subject of man's moral condition and relations, impels us to the belief that they learned at the same heavenly school, or, in other words, that they were inspired to tell the doctrine of human depravity.

With equal consistency and uniformity have the writers of the Old and New Testaments taught the doctrines of the Divine holiness and justice, and the necessity of a Divine pardon to man,—doctrines embraced in the gospel.

With the most unvarying consistency have the writers of our Scriptures taught that human guilt can be removed only by the shedding of blood. We are accustomed to regard Moses as the earliest of the inspired writers. It is possible, however, that the art of writing was coeval with the first of our race, and that there existed, long before the lifetime of the great lawgiver of the Jews, inspired writings,

which he has by Divine direction interwoven with the history that has been transmitted to us as the product of his pen. In the earliest records of the race we read the fact that animal sacrifices were offered to propitiate Divine justice; we are told that immediately after the fall the first pair were clothed in the skins of beasts, which we suppose had been offered in sacrifice, because animal food had not, at that early period, been permitted. The pious Abel, the son of the first parents, is represented as offering to the Lord a bloody sacrifice, which met the Divine complacency. We find Noah, after the deluge, building an altar unto the Lord, and offering to Him in sacrifice "of every clean beast and of every clean fowl." We have the most satisfactory evidence that, from Adam's time to that of Moses, animal sacrifices were invariably offered by the worshipers of the true God. The Levitical law, designed to be obligatory on the Jewish people until the coming of the Messiah, enjoined the constant offering of animal sacrifices, and bore, for many ages, testimony to the fact that without the shedding of blood there is no remission, and that by its effusion an offended God is appeased.

Every reader of the New Testament knows that there is nothing which that volume more earnestly declares than the fact of propitiation through blood; that fact is the grand theme of it, to which every other is made subordinate. Christ, presented to us as a Saviour, sympathizing and powerful, "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him," appears a priest who sacrifices himself on the altar of Divine justice. We are told that "we have redemption through his blood," that his blood "cleanseth from all sin." We see no propriety in the sacrifices of the patriarchs and the Levitical law, apart from the positive command of God and their typical character, they seem to our reason totally inadequate to the office assigned them. When, however, we consider the nature of Christ, his ineffable dignity, and his power over his own life, and also

his sufferings, so severe, and, on his own account, so undeserved, we find no difficulty in admitting the sufficiency and the reality of his atonement.

The unvarying teaching of the Scriptures, for so many ages, on the one subject of sacrifice for sin, and the termination of the sacrificial types in the great sacrifice of the cross, convince us that mankind have been receiving instruction on this subject from one source, and that Divine.

The harmony of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, on the subject of the person, work, and offices of the Messiah, is certainly the most remarkable thing in all history, and sufficient of itself fully to attest the truth of redemption. A mysterious person is spoken of in the beginning of the world, believed on as the Messiah to come by one nation for more than a thousand years, his life, character, and achievements minutely predicted; one appears at length, fulfilling most exactly all that had been foretold of that being, and surpassing immeasurably, in intellectual grandeur and moral excellence, all who had lived before Him. It is not strange that men should receive this person as a messenger from God.

We can read the history of Christ almost as clearly in the Scriptures of the ancient church as in the evangelists themselves. The coming of the Messiah was foretold in words full of consolation and hope to the despairing parents of the race. The Jews regarded the Shiloh, whose coming was foretold by the aged Jacob, as the Messiah, and expected their nation to maintain their independence until He appeared. Balaam's prophecy of the Messiah is striking and clear, and equally so is that of Moses with respect to the coming prophet. The Psalms, Isaiah, and Daniel abound with the clearest Messianic predictions. These prophecies were sufficient to convince the Jews that God would grant to them a great deliverer; wherever a son of Abraham lived or wandered, his most sacred and cherished

hope was that of a Messiah; that hope he pressed to his heart as his sweetest consolation in sorrow and death, and bequeathed to his offspring as the richest legacy. If the reader would examine the prophecies with respect to Christ, let him consult the "Christology" of Hengstenberg. We refer him also, if he would obtain all the information necessary on the subject here discussed, to Jonathan Edwards's "History of Redemption,"—a treatise worthy of its illustrious author, and furnishing abundant proof of the great extent of the learning, the strength of the reasoning faculty, and the vigor of the imagination, as well as of the fervor of the piety, of that incomparable man.

The representations of Christ, which are made in the Old Testament, are all of them consistent: they may be paradoxical, but they are not contradictory, and are not incapable of fulfillment. This harmony of utterance is certainly wonderful, and ought to have weight with us in determining the question, whether Jesus Christ is really the Redeemer of the world.

The prophecies of the Old Testament with respect to the Messiah have been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth: his character and achievements precisely correspond with them. He appeared as a man. He claimed to be Divine, calling himself the Son of God; thus, as the Jews said, making himself equal with God. His human nature and his Divine are both affirmed in the prophetic words of Isaiah: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The *mighty God*, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace: of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." The dignity and grandeur which all the prophets ascribe to his kingdom would lead us to regard Him as superior to any creature, however gifted, exalted, or inspired. Christ was a sufferer: for years exposed to shame, obloquy, penury, and persecution, He died at last like a malefactor. The con-

tempt poured on Him, his violent death, and many of the circumstances of it, were distinctly foretold. It had been predicted that, at the coming of the Messiah, the boundaries of the church should be extended: within a brief period after the resurrection of Jesus, his empire of love embraced within it a considerable portion of almost every nation under heaven.

Clear and abundant as are the prophecies of the Old Testament with respect to the Messiah, no man did or could understand them fully until they were expounded in the living character and actual history of Jesus Christ. They were indeed better understood by some than by others, and we cannot tell what precise degree of significance they bore to the more pious and enlightened Jews. But that the Messiah should be God and man at once, a conqueror and sufferer at the same time, a prince and an object of contempt, should die as a malefactor and be buried as a rich man, and that He should extend the church and make it triumphant through the degradation of the Jewish people, were paradoxes which none could reconcile with truth, riddles which none could solve, until prophecy became history. The types of the old economy, valuable as they were to the Jew, were not wholly intelligible to him until the Redeemer showed, by his sufferings, their application to Himself.

Christ alone, in his day and country, understood the idea of the Messiah as it was expressed in the Jewish Scriptures. We infer that He did, from the fact that He attempted to realize it; for one of superior wisdom, such as He displayed in everything else, never would have undertaken the fulfillment of unintelligible prophecies. He has thrown light on these prophecies, rendering them intelligible to us, and thus has shown his own intelligence with respect to them all. But how was it that Jesus Christ so far transcended his countrymen in his knowledge of the Messianic predictions, and that He reconciled so easily all their

hitherto invincible difficulties? Not merely because his piety was transcendent; for if an impostor He could not have been sincerely pious: not because his genius was transcendent: but because He was either God or inspired by the Divinity, or rather because He was the Messiah himself.

Christ not only understood but realized the scriptural idea of the Messiah. The Messianic prophecies are grand beyond all other predictions, and the fulfillment of them required the exercise of the most exalted, even Divine, qualities; yet Christ has fulfilled them all, as far as they relate to the Messiah's first visit to his people. We cannot imagine even that Christ would have undertaken to realize the scriptural ideal of the Messiah, unless He had believed himself divinely appointed to the work. Neither the goodness nor the wisdom of Christ can be called in question. He was the most benevolent of men, the greatest of theologians, and the greatest of ethical teachers. His goodness forbids us to regard Him as an impostor: his wisdom would not have allowed Him to encounter all the sufferings He endured, merely that He might seem to fulfill the Divine prophecies. Even if an uninspired man had been capable of doing and saying all that Jesus of Nazareth did and said, no man in his senses would, voluntarily, endure persecution, scorn, and an early and ignominious death for the purpose of fulfilling Divine predictions, unless he regarded himself as acting under the Divine direction: and Christ's sincerity proves his inspiration or his Divinity, since He could not have been mistaken as to his possession of the powers He claimed to exercise.

We may not have reasoned on this subject according to the usual rules of logic; but let the reader ask himself, as he sees the scheme of redemption emerging from the mists of the earlier ages, and becoming brighter and clearer through such a variety of witnesses, until it culminates at the cross, whether a Divine hand has not conducted it to

its consummation. The witnesses to redemption confirm one another's testimony; and it is impossible to ascribe to them deception or collusion.

CHAPTER V.

THE SELF-CONSISTENCY OF THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION AN ARGUMENT FOR ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

FROM the harmony of the scheme of redemption, or the consistency of the different portions of it with each other, apart from any consideration of the mode of its historic development, we may derive a conclusive argument for its Divine origin. Schemes of falsehood are never entirely symmetrical: they universally not only contain contradictions to acknowledged truths, but betray their nature and origin by the inconsistency of their various parts; they are destitute of just proportion because destitute of truth. We should especially with reason expect men to betray themselves into contradictions, when, without heavenly assistance, they attempt the formation of a system involving all the highest truths of religion; as, for example, the nature of God, the nature of man, and man's relations to the infinite Sovereign. Some systems of falsehood, which extended over only a narrow field, have seemed well proportioned, but even these have been incapable of enduring the test of a severe scrutiny. The plan of salvation has sometimes been assailed on the ground that it embraces inconsistencies; it must, however, when fully understood, appear, more than anything else known among men, full of the divinest harmony.

There is a grandeur in redemption, considered as a whole, which raises it far above the proud products of human

imagination and genius; it must be regarded as the conception of a most astute and exalted intellect. In moral sublimity it is altogether unparalleled; it breathes the purest benevolence, and proposes the loftiest ends. Could it for a moment be admitted that Christ was a mere enthusiast, and that all his expectations were unreasonable and vain, we must admire that heroic love which induced Him, even romantically, to offer himself a sacrifice for the world's welfare, and must stand amazed at the magnitude of his purpose to save such multitudes from all quarters of the earth, and all the generations of its varied population. He proposed to diffuse truth, love, and beauty over the world, and to raise human beings to a condition of angelic intelligence, purity, felicity, and splendor. The grandeur of the undertaking is more manifest, when we consider that He proposed to accomplish all this by the energies of his own intellect and the might of his own single arm. This consciousness of power and security as to success is itself sublime. As his eye swept the entire field of his meditated labor, He saw, at a glance, that He possessed and could control all the resources necessary to the work. Not the malice of his enemies, nor the perfidy of his friends, nor the scorn of the priests, nor the obloquy of the common people, nor the severity of the Roman government, nor even the manifested displeasure of his Father, could induce Him to doubt the authority of his commission, or deter Him from his work, as the Saviour of the world.

It is not, however, to the grandeur of redemption as a whole, either with respect to its execution or its design, that attention is now invited, but to the consistency of its parts. The gospel might be true, even though human beings were unable to perceive this consistency; nevertheless, since it can be seen, it furnishes an argument in behalf of the credibility of our religion.

The doctrines, which are included in redemption, are perfectly harmonious. The depravity of human nature, the

necessity of an atonement, the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ as the means of forgiveness and regeneration, are evangelical truths which have a logical connection with one another. If the first of these be true, so must the rest of them; and if the first of these be false, so must the rest of them. So, proving the truth of any one of them, all the others necessarily follow as logical sequences: regeneration, for example, proves man's total depravity, his need of forgiveness, and the necessity of such a sacrifice to secure it as was made by the Son of God.

The actual salvation of men, and the mode of it, harmonize with the representation which the gospel makes of the Divine perfections. That representation is confirmed by reason. It is not our object however, just at this time, to show its truth, but its correspondence with the rest of the gospel.

In the New Testament, the Deity is presented before us as a being of infinite mercy. According to the gospel, God offers to every human being, on whom the light of Christianity shines, a free and complete pardon of all his sins, an ample means of his recovery from the moral ruin into which he has fallen,—restoration to the Divine favor, restoration to holiness, and restoration to happiness. Certainly, this offer of inestimable benefits is consistent with the infinite mercy of the Father of spirits. The exercise of the Divine attributes in devising and executing the plan of redemption well corresponds with what the Scriptures have taught us of the vastness of the Divine compassion. The mercy of God is more conspicuous and glorious as seen through the medium of redemption, than it could have been had no impediments existed in the way of man's moral recovery. In the gift of the Son of God infinite mercy has made its greatest sacrifice and its brightest exhibition. Do any say that the actual salvation of the entire race were more consistent with infinite mercy? They speak of mercy such as the gospel does not ascribe

to God, such as reason does not inform them of, which, if it existed at all, being dissociated from justice, would be no moral attribute, and which certainly would leave no room for the operation of Divine justice in the affairs of men. Mercy effects, through the gospel, all that could be done for man consistently with the other attributes of God. It has been affirmed, sometimes, that there is no mercy displayed in the gospel, since the penalty of sin has been amply paid in the sufferings of the Redeemer. The mercy of God appears in his admitting a satisfaction for sin, and in his providing a substitute for sinners at such infinite cost.

The harmony between the Divine justice and man's salvation, as represented in the gospel, is manifest and complete. All the Scriptures affirm that God is infinitely just. The question is, how a just God can be a Saviour; and the answer to it is, that the Divine justice is fully satisfied by the sufferings of the Redeemer. The acceptance of his Son, as man's substitute, cannot be proved to be inconsistent with the most rigid justice of the Almighty. Injustice in this scheme! To whom? Not to God the Father; for the penalty of his law is paid, the safety of his government is preserved, the ends of justice are all attained, by the sufferings of the Son of God. Nor is there any injustice here to God the Son; for He voluntarily assumed the sinner's place, with a full intelligence of all its responsibilities, delighted to do the work of a mediator, covered himself with honor by his mediatorial achievements, having a full right to dispose as He pleased of a life which He had not derived from another, and for the use of which He was accountable to none. In the scheme of redemption, there is no injustice to the sinner himself, since, while he escapes punishment, a sufficient substitute is provided for him whom he cordially accepts. Every scheme of salvation, except that of the gospel, must be destitute of harmony, because it must fail to reconcile man's forgiveness

with the justice of God. A harmony with Divine justice, seen in the gospel, but seen in no other religion, gives to Christianity a claim on our belief such as no other religion possesses. An atonement made by a being of infinite dignity well corresponds with infinite justice: it is wholly improbable that the idea of it could have originated in any but the Divine mind.

All the Divine attributes are employed, and maintain a consistency in redemption. In it, it is enough to say, we find a most wonderful and beautiful harmony of the Divine justice and mercy. Without an atonement, these Divine attributes would never have been reconciled and never have co-operated in the salvation of man. "Mercy and truth have met together," both of them satisfied in the pardon of the sinner, justice even demanding his acquittal, since the penalty of his sin has been paid. These attributes harmonize nowhere else but in redemption. Each of them had been seen by men far along the line of its magnificent length; but never, until the Son of God expired on the cross, were they beheld where they meet, in the highest sublimities of the Godhead. A religion which is unable to reconcile these attributes would be incompetent to do what Christianity proposes to accomplish, for the welfare of the world. A system which harmonizes and reflects all the perfections of God must be itself, for that very reason, full of the most beautiful harmony that man has ever contemplated.

The New Testament contains expositions of the moral law: the gospel may be even said to embrace that law, and the other portions of the gospel are in perfect harmony with the moral law, which it embraces or expounds. Skepticism itself finds no fault with the ethical teachings of the Preacher on the mount; or, if it did even accuse Christ of misrepresenting the moral law, it must admit the consistency of his moral with his doctrinal teaching. According to the gospel, the moral law is pure, inexorable, and, as a

rule of human action, of perpetual obligation; with the purity of the law the atonement beautifully corresponds, inasmuch as it extends to all human transgressions, whether external or in the heart. The law never appears so inexorable as when we see it demanding the blood of a Divine sacrifice in satisfaction for its violations. The propitiatory offering of the cross is represented in the New Testament, as made with a view to bringing men into conformity with the law, or, in other words, with a view to making them holy. Christ, so far from coming to set aside the moral law, came to establish it as a rule of human action. The atonement furnishes new and powerful motives to moral obedience, and through the gospel is imparted the strength necessary for a compliance with the Divine statutes. Of all agencies that could have been used or conceived of, as availing to bring men under the dominion of the moral law, the most effective is redemption. Surely the gospel is in harmony with a law which it republishes, the penalty of which it pays, the honor of which it maintains, obedience to which it secures. No uninspired mind could have reconciled the idea of human salvation with that of the preservation of the dignity of the law, or could have conceived how sin could be punished and yet the sinner himself escape, or that impunity for sin could be consistent with the discouragement of vice, the encouragement of virtue, and the nurture of holiness. The harmony between the doctrinal and preceptive parts of the gospel is so wonderful as to prove that it is Divine.

The end of redemption is human salvation,—all the agencies and the means that it employs beautifully harmonize with that end. The Divinity of Christ, so fully affirmed in the New Testament, is eminently consistent with the vastness, grandeur, and difficulty of the work which He came to accomplish. The soul of man, created in the image of God, endowed with immortality, and capable of interminable progression and improvement, is of

inestimable value, and has some correspondence with the greatness of its Redeemer. The salvation of the soul, after it had been ruined, was a stupendous and godlike undertaking; it demanded such wisdom and power, and such intimacy with the court of heaven, as no being could have pretended to, except the coequal of the everlasting Father. God could no more delegate to a creature the power to redeem men than He could delegate to a creature the power to create men; none but a being essentially Divine could make an atonement for sin. If the power of redeeming could have been delegated, it never would have been, because he that redeems men by the magnitude and grandeur of his deed secures the highest gratitude of those whom he benefits and the highest admiration of all holy and intelligent beings,—acquires a love that ought to be given only to God, and a glory greater than God has ever obtained from any of his other works, a glory which He would as little think of permitting a creature to acquire as of laying his diadem and sceptre at an angel's feet. He that redeems the souls of men by the very act becomes Divine, because he acquires thereby a right to the affection and obedience of those whom he redeems, and to the homage of the universe. Man must be an idolater, or his redeemer must be Divine; and we cannot for a moment suppose that man is shut up to the sin of idolatry. That the doctrine of Christ's Divinity harmonizes with that of the atonement is evident from the historic fact, that all who have admitted the one have also admitted the other, and all who have denied the one have also denied the other.

Christ's human nature harmonizes with the rest of the gospel. There was a propriety in the Redeemer's presenting an example of human perfection. As suffering was due *for* man, as the penalty of sin, it was perhaps absolutely necessary that the atoning suffering should be human. The Divine nature is incapable of suffering; and if the Son

of God, in effecting his redemptive work, necessarily assumed an inferior nature, it is manifestly fit that it should be the nature of the being whose cause He undertook and in whose place He substituted himself. There was an eminent propriety in Christ's assuming our nature, that He might intercede for us. We need his intercession, and He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points as we are. The human tears which the Saviour shed over our sorrows sweetly correspond with his embassy of love, win to Him our confidence, and endear Him to our hearts.

There would be no harmony in a scheme of salvation that did not propose to secure the pardon of men. It is consistent with the end of redemption that it commences its work by removing from the mind of the Deity all obstacles to the sinner's forgiveness, and afterwards renders the sinner willing to accept the pardon which is offered him. The gospel would be sadly wanting in just proportions if, while it offered pardon to men, it made no provision for their regeneration and sanctification. To a being under the dominion of unholy affections, a pardon would be of little practical value. The gospel harmonizes with its end, however, in that it makes provision for man's moral renewal and his restoration to perfect holiness. Redemption leaves nothing wanting to the perfection of either the condition or the character of those who share its benefits.

Faith, the means which man employs in securing his salvation, is manifestly well adapted to its end. It is a fit instrument of securing pardon, for it is a willingness to accept salvation on the terms on which it is proposed, on the part of a being who can do nothing meritorious, and by whom the only thing that remains to be done is to trust; and,—wonderful harmony of faith with the rest of the scheme!—from its very nature it purifies the soul in the apprehension of that Divine truth which is the necessary instrument of sanctification.

Here, then, is a scheme of the greatest amplitude, which contains doctrines that are all consistent with one another, which is consistent with each of the Divine attributes, and harmonizes and sheds lustre on them all, whose doctrinal and preceptive parts are entirely consistent, and all whose means are adapted to its proposed end. Was there ever more perfect harmony? Could any human mind have invented such a scheme?

The whole moral law, which has been written on the human heart by the finger of God, is not more consistent with itself, or better adapted to the necessities of man, than the scheme of redemption; and we can no more doubt the Divine origin of the one than of the other. This difference, however, there is between them: an uninspired man might have made a clear statement of the first, while only a being, himself Divine or inspired from heaven, could have revealed the other. The conception of the plan of redemption was as far beyond human ability as was the execution of it. What grand principles it embraces, subjects for thought! What glorious facts, sources of moral emotion! Pagan writers represent their gods as mingling in human conflicts; they had no just conceptions of the Deity, or they never would have imagined Him as participating visibly in earthly strifes. But the cause in which the Son of God appeared on earth was worthy his presence. The true God has presented himself but once on earth; He bowed the heavens and came down to fight a battle alone, and to shed victorious blood, to do a deed the most momentous in itself and in its results that the sun has ever looked upon. It has been the design of this chapter to draw an argument, not from the grandeur of redemption, but its harmony; and yet we see its grandeur in its harmony. We do not pretend that we can grasp this whole scheme. The greatness of its principles, however, reaching out into the infinite, so far from staggering, serves only to sustain and strengthen our faith; its vastness and incomprehen-

bility place it beyond the domain of reason and make it an object of faith, which to men is more sublime than an object of vision.

“A truth so strange ’twere bold to think it true;
If not far bolder still to disbelieve.”

CHAPTER VI.

REDEMPTION ATTESTS ITS DIVINITY BY DISCLOSING NEW AND, AT THE SAME TIME, RATIONAL VIEWS OF THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

REDEMPTION furnishes evidence of the Divinity of its origin by disclosing views of the Divine perfections that are new, and that yet entirely meet the approbation of the reason of man. Soame Jenyns, in the work he has written to prove the credibility of the Christian religion,—a work of great argumentative power, which is said to have removed the skepticism of the patriot and orator, Patrick Henry,—argues for the truth of Christianity on the ground that in the New Testament are found many new precepts altogether opposed to the ideas of pagan philosophers, but which an enlightened conscience is bound to approve. We shall adopt a similar mode of reasoning with respect to the attributes of God; we shall contend for the truth of redemption on the ground that the scheme of salvation discloses new and original views of the Divinity altogether superior, if not entirely opposed, to those of pagan philosophers, but which, since their discovery, commend themselves to the consciences and understandings of all men. Powerful as is the argument for redemption which is drawn from the ethical teachings of Christ, that which is derived from his theological teachings is still more conclusive. Some minds may be so averse to truth and so blinded by sin, as not to perceive the force of this argument. There are men whose

skepticism nothing can shake, and who would not believe if all the Saviour's miracles were reproduced before them.

In the previous chapter was shown the harmony which exists between other portions of the gospel and the representations which it contains of the Divine perfections. Here we are led to consider the harmony existing between the evangelical representations of God and those which reason makes to us. The beautiful theology of Christ, although already somewhat dwelt on, can scarcely receive too much attention ; it is, above all other literature, worthy of admiration and adapted to enlighten the understanding and purify the affections.

In inquiring into the conceptions of the Divinity embraced in redemption, we shall not feel obliged to limit ourselves to the personal teaching of Christ, but may refer to what has been taught with respect to God by inspired men both before his coming and since his death. We shall, however, dwell mainly on that theology which came from the lips and was exhibited in the life and death of the Saviour himself. He has added to the science of God as taught by the prophets, and He has certainly rendered theological truth more luminous and lovely. If the Son of God has spoken at all, we must regard all the Scriptures as his utterance.

All men whom revelation has not enlightened have been greatly ignorant of the perfections of God. The ignorance of the mass of the people in heathen lands on this subject fills our minds with the profoundest astonishment and pity. It were incredible to us, were not the evidence of the fact so ample, that the human reason has become so clouded and perverted with respect to God as we find it, in by far the greater portion of the world. Even the most gifted of classic poets have ascribed to their divinities all the imperfections and vices of men. Nor has the ignorance spoken of resulted from a want of the faculties and facilities necessary to the discovery of religious truth, but from

an unwillingness on the part of the heathen "to retain God in their knowledge," for everywhere around them were the proofs that the world is the work of a Divine Architect; and in the constitution of man himself, and especially in the law written on every human heart, may be found the evidence of the existence of an infinite Law-giver and of most of his moral attributes. To convince us of the theological ignorance that has prevailed among unevangelized nations, it is sufficient to recall to our memories the fact that they have been idolaters, and that their idolatry has been of the most abject sort. Ignorance among the masses of the people, so prevalent and profound, is not reconcilable with the idea of the existence of any great knowledge of God among the learned. Philosophers failed to instruct the common people in religion, because they were so little enlightened on the subject themselves. We know that the philosophers of the pagan world were profoundly ignorant of the Divine perfections. Some of them may, indeed, have obtained glimpses of these perfections, but by none of them were they apprehended in their consistency and completeness. The apostle gave utterance to the result of a wide observation of his own, as well as to inspired words, when he declared that "the world by wisdom knew not God." The cultivated men of heathen antiquity, especially the Grecians, the most intellectual people of all time, have bequeathed to succeeding generations many noble monuments of their genius. In eloquence, poetry, painting, architecture, and sculpture many of them are unrivaled in modern history; in the science of astronomy the attainments of many of them were wonderful and vast. The progress of some of them, in the philosophy of the human mind and in logic, excites our enthusiastic admiration. Amid all their artistic conceptions and philosophic discoveries, however, they could not "find out God."

Let us inquire into the theological opinions held by some

of the ancient philosophers ; we direct attention to only the best of them. The dualistic theory of the Divinity prevailed in several Oriental countries, whence it was carried into Greece. According to this theory, there exist two objects of the highest worship,—one purely good, and the other entirely evil. It is easily seen that this system is subversive of that doctrine of the Divine unity which lies at the base of all true theology. If we could find theological truth in any degree of purity among ancient philosophers, we would find it in Greece ; we search for it there in vain. All the Grecian philosophers believed in the eternity of matter, and, of course, were ignorant of the fact that God is the creator of the universe ; and, almost without an exception, their ideas were pantheistic. Pythagoras, the founder of the Italian school, which belonged more to Greece than to Italy, is supposed by many to have entertained lofty conceptions of the Deity. Justin Martyr says of him, that he believed in the unity of God ; he also regarded the Deity as pervading the universe. His opinions, however, seem to be pantheistic, while he had no adequate conceptions of the moral attributes of God. Anaxagoras seems to have been the first of the Grecians who thought of mind as separate from matter, and regarded the Deity as a pure mind governing the universe ; but beyond this his theology does not extend, and it has even been said of him that “mind had not yet appeared to him as a true force above nature.” The Eleatic and Heraclitic philosophers were pantheistic, while the Sophists held no distinct theological opinions. To Socrates and Plato, the greatest of the Grecian philosophers, if Aristotle be excepted, we are most likely to look for sound theological opinions ; and their theology may be regarded as identical. Socrates is more distinguished as a moral philosopher than as a theologian. Neither Socrates nor Plato recognized God as the creator of the world. The fundamental principle of Plato is that “from nothing nothing

can proceed," and he supposes the architect of the world to have formed it from pre-existent matter. It is also doubtful whether his ideas were not pantheistic. A writer of considerable authority says of him: "Whether he conceived the highest cause to be a personal being or not, is a question which hardly admits of a definite answer. The logical result of his system would exclude the personality of God." We only contend that, upon the question whether God has a substantial existence distinct from that of the universe, he has expressed, and probably entertained, no very clear ideas. Nor are we to imagine that Socrates was more enlightened on this subject than his illustrious pupil. Still, we must admit that he recognized the Divine omniscience and providence. Xenophon represents him as saying: "Reflect that your own mind directs your body by its volitions, and you must be convinced that the Intelligence of the universe disposes all things according to his pleasure. Can you imagine that your eye is capable of discerning distant objects, and that the eye of God cannot, at the same instant, see all things? or that, whilst your mind contemplates the affairs of different countries, the understanding of God cannot attend at once to all the affairs of the universe? Such is the nature of the Divinity that He sees all things, hears all things, is everywhere present, and constantly superintends all events." "He who disposes and directs the universe, who is the source of all that is fair and good, who, amid successive changes, preserves the course of nature unimpaired, and to whose laws all beings are subject, this supreme Being, though himself invisible, is made manifest in the grandeur of his operations." Plato did not recognize the absoluteness of the Divine sovereignty, but held that matter has a refractory force, and so resists the will of the great Sovereign that He cannot carry his plans into perfect execution. On this subject Socrates probably concurred with him. The Athenian sage, besides acknowledging a supreme Deity, be-

lieved in the existence of inferior divinities, who control the ordinary affairs of nature and to whom worship ought to be paid. Here, then, we have before us the opinions of the two great theologians of classic antiquity. They believed in a supreme God, as did most of the heathen; they acknowledged his omniscience and providence; they called Him *the Good*, although they had no definite ideas with respect to his moral attributes; yet they knew not God as creator of the world, limited his providence, were doubtful as to the distinctness of his essential existence, were *polytheists* and *idolaters*. Surely they were greatly ignorant of God. The Stoics, the followers of Zeno, were pantheists; with them providence was immutable necessity, or fate, and piety was submission to it. The system of Epicurus is virtually atheistic; he acknowledged, indeed, the existence of gods, but gives them no place in the creation, organization, or management of the world. According to Aristotle, God is immutable and eternal, the first mover of matter which he did not create, neither infinite nor omnipresent, not a spectator of human affairs, and not a proper object of the worship of men. In the accuracy and extent of his theological knowledge, Cicero, the eloquent philosopher of Rome, though superior to Zeno and Epicurus, whose systems he condemned, did not surpass Plato, whom he so much admired and imitated, and has never been able to escape the charge of polytheism. Different ancient philosophers held fragments of theological truths; but all these fragments combined and arranged would fail to form a perfect system. A conclusive proof of man's need of a revelation is furnished by the fact that Plato and Aristotle, with their wonderful genius, remained so profoundly ignorant of the nature of God.

Christ has done more for the science of theology than Plato has accomplished for that of metaphysics, or Aristotle for that of logic. Nor does this simply prove that Christ possessed a genius equal or superior to theirs. It

proves that He was inspired or Divine. We are persuaded that human genius must have its limits, and that, debased as it is by sin, it cannot, without supernatural aid, rise up into the pure regions of Divine thought. Perhaps, with a spotless moral nature like Christ's, Socrates and Plato would have given utterance to theological truth, if not as extensive, as pure.

Christ has taught everything that man can know with respect to the Supreme Being. He has reaffirmed what the Jewish Scriptures have said of God as the creator of the universe; we certainly claim for the gospel the revelation of the fact, notwithstanding its having been known to the ancient Jews, that the world was created from nothing. Christ has taught the unity of God in terms most explicit, representing the one Lord of all as the only proper object of religious worship. The spirituality of the Divine Being He has taught as it was not taught even in the Old Testament, and certainly as it was not understood by his countrymen; He said beautifully to the woman of Samaria, "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." And in teaching the necessity and the possibility of a spiritual worship He went above all Jewish conceptions and transcended all his predecessors, giving the most forcible impression of the Divine spirituality by indicating the spirituality of the highest and most accepted worship. Christ is original when He suggests to us the fatherhood of God in the words of that prayer which is called *his*, "Our Father which art in heaven." By no one has the providence of God been so forcibly and so sweetly taught as by Christ when He represents the infinite Father as clothing the grass of the field, sustaining the lily as it blooms, feeding the sparrow and noticing its fall, numbering the hairs of our heads, caring for us at all times, and providing with paternal vigilance for all our wants. Christ has described the one living spirit that created and presides over the universe as a

being of infinite wisdom and power, infinitely pure, just, and good. If He has not made more distinct disclosures of the nearness of the Divinity to man, He has at least made clearer representations of the amiableness of God, than were made by the prophets. As compared with that of the pagan philosophers and the writers of the Old Testament, the theology of Christ is as new as his ethics.

It is to the scheme of redemption itself we must turn, to obtain the most affecting ideas of God. Christ has taught us what God is more by what He has done than by what He has said. We must listen to Him when He speaks on this subject, not from the mount of beatitudes only, but from the cross. More than anything in material nature, with all its grandeur, loveliness, and likeness to God,—more than anything in the moral law, with all its purity, and although it is regarded as a transcript of the Divine character,—does salvation through a redeemer bring the Deity near to men and afford them distinct and lovely visions of his attributes. In redemption we learn the Divine unity; from the one mediator we learn the oneness of God. In this scheme, in which the good spirits of other parts of the universe are interested, the wisdom, benevolence, and justice of the one everlasting Father are represented as displayed and satisfied. The wisdom of God, in conceiving such a plan and providing the means of its successful execution, is manifest. Nature with her varied combinations and compensations, and providence with all its wondrous mechanism, fail to furnish us such exhibitions of infinite wisdom as are made in redemption. The Divine power executing the purposes of Divine wisdom, and sustaining the Redeemer under his awful weight of woes, is conspicuous in this scheme. God never made such a display of omnipotence as when He showed himself “mighty to save.” We are most impressed with the paternal watchfulness of the everlasting Father when we learn that He has sent his Son to the earth on an embassy of mercy and spared not

the effusion of his blood when it was necessary to wash away the deep stain of our guiltiness. In the cross we behold the brightest manifestation of the Divine benevolence that the universe has witnessed; and there the Divine justice is displayed with equal clearness. In every step of the work of redemption, in all the progress of its disclosure for centuries, and most of all in the great expiatory death itself, are God's mercy and justice at once conspicuous. The Divine attributes are so distinctly displayed in redemption that they can be perceived by the feeblest and least enlightened intellects, that would never have read them in nature or the ordinary Divine providences, and that are incapable of clearly apprehending any abstract statement of them. Even the best-informed Christian must turn to the cross for vivid and satisfactory conceptions of God. No philosopher of antiquity, not even Socrates, though he regarded the Deity as preserving the universe from decay, was aware of the depth of the Divine interest in human affairs; or of the extent of the Divine benevolence which makes sacrifices for man's welfare, and that of the Divine justice which requires a satisfaction for human sin. Without the light of redemption, it was impossible to concede great benevolence to God without doing disparagement to his justice, or to ascribe any great justice to Him without underrating his benevolence.

Christ's person must be regarded as constituting a portion of the system of redemption; and that person, both in its human and Divine aspects, serves to communicate to us vivid views of God. As a man, Christ was perfect; and He is the only perfect man of whose character we have a distinct delineation, and of whose actions we have a minute and accurate description. Perfect human nature is an image of God; magnify the qualities of the perfect man into the infinite, and you have attained the highest conceptions that human beings can form of the Divinity; and in the contemplation of the man Christ Jesus you may learn

God as pagan philosophers could not. Christ is also Divine; in his person the real Deity has stood on the earth revealing all his attributes, his omniscience in discerning the spirits of men and foretelling future events, his omnipotence and his superiority to inexorable and irresistible fate in overturning the laws of material nature and in his empire over human hearts, his infinite justice in publishing a law of perfect purity, his infinite love in redeeming the world.

It remains for us to show that the ideas with respect to the Divine attributes, which redemption affords us and which philosophers entertained only imperfectly or not at all, are *reasonable* and just. They are not the less true because reason had failed to discover them; reason may verify what it could not have suggested. God's character may be learned from physical nature, from providence, and from the constitution of man. The sciences, which throw light on these subjects, have been improving for centuries; and these sciences throw on the subject of theology light of which the greatest sages of antiquity were destitute. In physical science many contrivances of nature and their uses have been made known in modern ages: the law of gravitation has been discovered, and been found to extend to all the universe; and the laws of light have been ascertained and been found to apply far as the remotest nebulae that are visible with the aid of the telescope. The science of history (and history may be called a science) has made progress in the lapse of ages; the philosophic historian has thrown much light on the Divine providence,—men have learned to perceive the hand of God in their personal affairs to a degree unpracticed in the earlier ages of the world.

In modern ages, and even during the last half century, great improvements have been made in psychology, or the science which treats of the phenomena of the human mind. It is denied by some that any such improvements

have been made; some affirm that the same psychological and moral questions have been discussed, from the times of Plato and Zeno, without arriving at any satisfactory conclusions. It must be admitted that Plato suggested important metaphysical ideas, which have been overlooked by many of the philosophers of modern ages, and that virtue has been defined with less precision and justness by many Christian philosophers than by Zeno. Nevertheless it is true that the science of the human mind is better understood in the present than it has been at any past era. A degree of harmony exists among philosophers on many vexed psychological questions, such as was unknown in former ages. The influence of Reid, of Scotland, in settling in the minds of many in Europe and America important questions in the sciences of mind and morals, has been immense; no man has exerted greater influence in that way, although the transparency of his reasoning may seem to render it less profound. The influence of Cousin in clearing up many difficult questions in mental science has been great. How far this great French philosopher has been influenced by the German, Kant, and how far his ontological opinions are worthy of condemnation, we need not inquire. No man of the present century has done more towards settling great metaphysical questions, which have been long discussed, than Sir William Hamilton. It is remarkable that he and Cousin, though differing so widely in their ontology, should agree so fully on all questions having respect to the phenomena of the human mind. Moral philosophy has made progress as really as psychology: Butler has triumphed over Paley. As a proof of the increased influence of right systems of mental and moral science, it is apparent that almost all men are now prepared to admit the existence of certain primary truths in the human mind, which are the necessary basis of all thought, and to recognize right as an absolute thing, and conscience as an original and independent faculty. Allusion has been made to

modern improvements in the sciences, for the purpose of showing that reason may *now* perceive the truth of theological doctrines, which the philosophers of antiquity failed and were unable to discover. Let us here say, that a work exhibiting fully the correspondence between Christianity and just systems of mental and moral philosophy is a desideratum in theological literature, as much to be desired as any of the desiderata of which Bacon has written.

The proofs that reason can ascribe no other attributes to God, except those which it is the glory and distinction of redemption to have brought to light, might well fill a whole volume; yet a satisfactory argument on the subject may be embraced within a narrow space. The *existence of God* is proved from reason; the contrivances in nature, which reveal a great designer, and the law written on the heart, which reveals an infinite lawgiver, sufficiently attest it. Reason proves also that God is the *creator* of the universe; to believe the fact that He called matter into existence from nothing is far more reasonable than to believe that it existed from eternity. A belief in the eternity of matter conducts either to atheism, which is disproved by the marks of design, which pervade the world, and is contradicted by the psychological truth that every effect must have a cause, or to pantheism, which is opposed to the teachings of moral science, subversive of that moral nature which we feel, that conscience that speaks to us, and those moral distinctions which we are compelled to recognize; God's *providence* is known by the light of nature; nothing can be more reasonable than the belief that the great Being, who created and organized the material universe, also conducts it to the great end for which it was formed; and if He supervises the laws of physical nature, it must be believed that He also superintends those moral laws, whose existence is as well known, the results of whose operations are so momentous to the

subjects of them, and in whose execution the glory of Him that has promulged them is so deeply involved.

The *eternity* of God is proved from that necessity of a first cause, which psychology teaches; the first cause is itself uncaused, and therefore eternal. The *power* of God is proved, and is shown to be *infinite*, from his creating the world out of nothing. The *unity* of God is proved by the harmony that pervades his works and providence; for example, by that law of gravitation and those laws of light which prevail through all nature. Natural science confirms all the representations which revelation has made of *the Divine wisdom*; and the displays of infinite wisdom, made in the material world, prepare us to appreciate those more glorious displays of it that redemption furnishes. It has been said that nature proves the Divine wisdom and power to be vast, but not infinite; besides other evidence of the infinitude of these attributes, by a law of the mind it is *suggested*, on the condition of surveying the exhibition of Divine wisdom and power in nature.

It is not incredible that God possesses the degree of *benevolence* that the gospel ascribes to Him. The earth is full of the manifestations of the Divine goodness. We find the proof of it in that Divine law which enjoins on us nothing but what it is our interest and happiness to do, and forbids to us nothing but what is destructive of our welfare. This attribute is exhibited in the moral constitution of man, inasmuch as the exercise of the benevolent affections imparts the most exquisite pleasure, while the indulgence of the malevolent affections is attended always with disquietude and pain. It has been proved in a previous chapter that reason bears testimony to the *mercy* of God.

Reason teaches that God possesses that attribute of infinite *justice* which revelation makes known to us. An all-powerful Being, commanding the resources of the universe, can have no temptation to injustice. The earth abounds

with the evidence of the justice of its Ruler. Many suffer here because they are guilty; none suffer more than they deserve; and if the sufferings of any are less than their deserts, let it be remembered that an eternity remains in which to rectify the disproportion, and that respite and exemption from punishment are secured to men on earth through a scheme of mercy that is altogether consistent with the claims of justice. In the history of nations and of individuals there have been remarkable exhibitions of this Divine attribute. God has placed justice in the human breast: a sufficient proof that He himself is just. The human conscience approves of justice in God, and in man it inflicts the awards of Divine justice on the soul: it pronounces its decisions in accordance with justice; it may indeed be said to bear direct and uniform testimony to the existence of this Divine attribute. Did not the internal monitor testify so clearly in behalf of absolute right and the existence of Divine justice, mankind, under the influence of wild passion, would banish from the earth all moral law and all good morals, and in the general disorder and ruin abrogate the civil law itself.

Reason bears testimony to the *holiness* of God, as it is seen in redemption. Says a writer much esteemed in this day: "It is certain that the conscience affords evidence that God, proven on other grounds to exist, must approve of moral excellence. We are constrained to believe that He who planted the conscience in our bosoms loves the virtue that it would lead us to love. We are forced to the conclusion that He who stirred up these reproaches in our breasts himself hates the sin which they would lead us to hate. By the analogy of human design, we infer in the universe the operation of a mighty designer; and by the analogy of man's moral sentiments, we conclude that the Creator of the universe is possessed of those moral qualities by which He is not only the maker and sustainer of all things, but their righteous governor and their judge."

We have seen that redemption, as unfolded by Christ and his apostles, presents ideas of the Divine perfections which are new and original, such as the pagan philosophers never had; we have also seen that those ideas accord with the dictates of reason. Whence came those true and original ideas? From what source did the illiterate apostles receive them? The answer is that they came only by inspiration, they could have come only in that way; and if they did so come, redemption is Divine. The moral law, as delivered by Moses, proves its Divine origin, by reflecting so brightly the perfections of God; redemption proves its Divine origin, by reflecting those perfections with still greater lustre and distinctness.

CHAPTER VII.

REDEMPTION DISCLOSES NEW AND RATIONAL VIEWS OF THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

REASON confirms what Christianity has taught with respect to the Divine providence. This subject was alluded to in the last chapter; it demands, however, a more full consideration. The argument of this chapter is not precisely similar to that of the preceding; it is not as strong an argument in favor of the credibility of our religion, for it must be admitted that the doctrine of Divine providence was not altogether original with Christ. It was recognized by pagans, who imagined their divinities to mingle in and preside over the material elements and human affairs. It was also taught by the philosophers of antiquity generally: although it was denied by Epicurus, Plato and Cicero were its warm defenders. Nevertheless, it may be justly said that Christ has rendered it more apparent than it had ever been among the heathen, and that

the Divine providence explained by Him is something more beautiful than ever it had been conceived to be by the philosophers of antiquity, as He has given it the melody of the birds of the air and the fragrantcy of the flowers of the field. The denial of the Divine providence is one of the forms of modern infidelity; and we shall in this chapter at least answer one of the objections to our Divine Christianity, which some of its adversaries have urged with the greatest earnestness.

No doctrine is more clearly taught in the sacred Scriptures than that of the Divine providence. It was so fully exhibited in the writings of the Old Testament that no Jew failed to apprehend it. Christ has most beautifully and forcibly presented it in his sermon on the mount, in which He represents God as clothing the grass of the field, noticing the fall of a sparrow, and numbering the hairs of our head. He also alludes to God's providential government, when He says, "My Father worketh hitherto." An apostle has said, "In Him we live and move and have our being," and that "by Him all things consist, and He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." It were idle to quote other passages of the Scriptures for the purpose of proving that they teach this doctrine, since no one will deny that it is one of their most prominent doctrines.

"Divine providence," it has been said, "is the power which God exerts without intermission in and upon all his works. Defined as to its visible manifestations, it is God's preservation and government of all things." "Providence," according to the definition of another, "is the care which God takes of all things to uphold them in being, and to direct them to the ends which He had determined to accomplish by them." The doctrine having most plausibility, that is opposed to this, is, that, although God created the universe, He has made it a self-sustaining machine,—that is, has impressed on it laws which execute themselves, and left it to work out its own results. The poet Cowper

states and opposes this theory in the following beautiful lines :

“Some say that in the origin of things,
 When all creation started into birth,
 The infant elements received a law
 From which they swerve not since. That under force
 Of that controlling ordinance they move,
 And need not his immediate hand, who first
 Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.
 Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
 The encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
 The great Artificer of all that moves
 The stress of a continual act, the pain
 Of unremitted vigilance and care,
 As too laborious and severe a task.
 So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
 To span omnipotence, and measure might
 That knows no measure by the scanty rule
 And standard of his own, that *is* to-day
 And *is not* ere to-morrow's sun go down.
 But how should matter occupy a charge,
 Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
 So vast in its demands, unless impelled
 To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
 And under pressure of some conscious cause?
 The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
 Sustains, and is the life of, all that lives;
 Nature is but a name for an effect
 Whose cause is God.”

One of the writers of the present century, who opposed the doctrine of Divine providence, was M. Auguste Comté, the author of the “Positive Philosophy.” His theory is, that man can become acquainted with only the phenomena of nature, and can know nothing of final causes; and thus he excludes the Deity from the universe. Combe, in his “Constitution of Man,” regards the universe as placed under a system of laws, moral and physical, but leaves no place for the operations of the Deity. The author of the “Vestiges of the Natural History of the Creation” affirms that it is impossible to suppose a distinct exertion of almighty power for the formation of the world. Humboldt,

in his "Cosmos," gives no place to the providence of God. There are many in all Christian lands, both of the illiterate and the learned, who regard the universe as only a self-sustaining machine.

Let us here crowd together some important truths with respect to the Divine providence. It must not be overlooked that God usually governs his universe through the operation of general laws: there is an uniformity in the methods of the Divine providential government. God is always everywhere present in the administration of his universal affairs, so that, while He exercises a general control over them, He also directs the minutest events: his providence is at once general and particular. The Deity exerts a providential control not only over physical nature, but also over the soul of man. This control over the human soul is, doubtless, exerted by moral means in part; it is also exerted by means of physical arrangements. Of this latter truth a striking illustration may be found in the natural influence of virtue and vice on bodily health and the material prosperity of men. We see how God employs physical afflictions in the accomplishment of moral good, and men have learned to fear lest the elements of nature should be employed in the punishment of their sins. It is a truth, worthy our profound consideration, that when God ordained his arrangements for the government of the world, He made provision for the answer of prayer, which He could as easily do as anything He has done in the formation of his universal scheme.

While we regard the theory that the universe sustains itself as absurd, we do not admit the validity of the objection to it, that it excludes the possibility of miracles and prayer. It is true that most of its advocates do reject the ideas of moral results from the laws of nature, of the efficacy of prayer, and of the possibility of miracles; they, doubtless, adopt their theory for the sake of escaping these ideas. Still, it is true that if the universe were self-sustain-

ing, there might be moral laws and machinery as well as physical, and prayers might be answered, and miracles might be performed. If God may make physical laws to execute themselves, why may He not make moral laws to do the same? Why may not the moral machinery be as perfect as the material? Why may not the two be supposed to co-operate on the theory that they sustain themselves, as they do on the theory that God sustains them? If there be any self-sustaining law of nature, why may there not be a law whereby prayer secures other benefits besides its reflex influence on him who offers it? As to miracles, if the universe can be thought of as self-sustaining, there is no difficulty in supposing that the Deity may have so made the machinery of nature as to diverge temporarily from its usual operations at any given time. Although uniformity of action is generally necessary in nature, the machinery would only seem more perfect when able to adjust itself so as to suit great emergencies. If it could be proved that God had retired from the control of his universe, we would not doubt the existence of moral laws, of the efficacy of prayer, and of miracles. We must suppose that a machinery which can execute such laws as philosophers call the laws of nature, can also of itself, from the nice adjustment of its parts, and the impulse first given it by the Almighty's hand, accomplish any conceivable purpose of the great Creator.

We shall now answer some of the objections to the doctrine of a Divine providence. It has been asked, If God controls all things, why are the operations of nature so uniform? It has been said that He would not bind nature to one unvarying course if He were always present to act himself. We answer that God's operations are uniform because they are the best. He has chosen a certain course of action, and invariably pursues it, because it is most fitted to accomplish the ends He has in view. Even if the universe were a self-sustaining machine, the Deity

might have refused to give it what would appear to us as uniformity of action ; and would have given it unvarying laws only because they were the best means of effecting his purposes. We may retort the question, and ask the objector why the laws of nature are so uniform ; and he can only answer, because being the best they must continue to operate. God being himself immutable and a lover of order, if He act himself, must act with uniformity ; or if it be possible for us to conceive of his making a self-sustaining universe, He must impart to it some of his own uniformity of action. Order must belong to God, whether He acts directly or through machinery. Let us say, then, that the laws of nature act uniformly, because the God of order has appointed and sustains them. The uniformity of the operation of the laws of nature is in every way favorable to the interests of man. It confirms the psychological truth that every effect must have a cause, and that the same causes will produce the same effects,—a truth which admits of confirmation, although intuitively derived ; thus it leads men to the contemplation of a first cause, to the knowledge of God. If what are called the laws of nature were not uniform in their action, if they had no consistency and symmetry, men would naturally conceive that the universe is governed by caprice or chance, and not by an intelligent Sovereign. In such a case, there could exist no science or philosophy ; nor would there be found in nature that unity amid diversity which constitutes its beauty. Were there no uniformity in nature, men could make no adequate provision for their physical wants ; they would not know what they were not to do, or what they were required to do ; they would have no confidence in either the Divine threatenings or the Divine promises. And yet, let it be borne in mind, that God is not inexorably bound by any system of rules. He ever acts voluntarily ; He may even choose to conceal from us, in some cases, the uniformity of the action of his law, or do what to our feeble vision seems

inconsistent with his general purposes. We may say, at least, that if a man cannot prove that God would not act uniformly and consistently, if He acts at all in nature, he cannot derive from the uniformity of nature an argument against the Divine providence.

The development theory, as urged by the author of the "Vestiges," cannot be presented successfully as an objection to God's providential government. That theory is totally unproved in all its aspects; on any theory, it must be admitted that many of God's most perfect works were the first to exist. But admit the theory and the transmutations it calls for; still, God may be active in producing the alleged changes, and may control them, just as certainly as He might impress on nature the laws which produce them. Were we convinced that God, in creation, commenced with the most inferior creatures, and ascended gradually and regularly to the highest, or that one species of animals was transmuted into another, we would still see the necessity for a God to create and a providence to sustain and control all things. Vary as you may your opinions of the mode of the Divine action, the necessity for it remains; if to make like produce like requires the presence of God, much more, or at least equally as much, to make like produce the unlike requires that presence.

To the objection brought against the Divine providence, that it makes God the author of the physical evils that befall mankind, we shall give no lengthened reply. It is to be remembered that those physical ills are the just and natural punishment of man's sin; and that God's character is in no way relieved from the charges of severity, by saying that He has invented and set in operation a machine which necessarily inflicts evil on mankind. To say that He has made the best machine He could, and that calamity inevitably results from any Divine mechanism, is to limit the power of the Almighty. Why may we not

say, with as much propriety, that God in providence acts as well as He can? God is certainly responsible for the working of this machine, and, if it goes wrong, is bound to correct its aberrations. An objection, such as we have just stated, if it has any force at all, weighs against the perfection and, indeed, against the very existence of the Deity.

The freedom of the human will is not (as some allege that it is) any more interfered with by supposing that God acts and exercises control directly in his universe, than by imagining that He has invented and set agoing a machine which works according to fixed and invariable laws. Indeed, the theory we oppose seems more than any other to militate against the liberty of the human will; nor does it remove from God any charge of responsibility as to human sin, if we are presumptuous enough, on any theory, to asperse Him as the author of sin.

No reason can be assigned for the Creator's withdrawal from the superintendence and control of his universe, even if such withdrawal came within the range of possible things. All are obliged to admit that He may, if He choose, in any way interfere with the workmanship of his hands; his power must be adequate to control what it was adequate to create. No argument against the Divine providential government can be derived from the *character* of God. Shall any man say that the vastness of the universe renders the control of it irksome and laborious to the Creator? That were to limit God's power, to think of Him as such an one as ourselves, and to forget that his infinite happiness consists in the exercise of his infinite attributes. God had only to say, "Let there be light, and there was light"; and easy to Him as speech or thought is the upholding and government of all things. He saw the creation at a glance, and there is no object too large for his management or too minute for his control. Nor can we say that the government of the universe is unworthy

of a God ; that which it was not beneath Him to create, it is not beneath Him to control. Could we ascertain the high and sacred purposes which are to be accomplished by this universe of created matter and mind, the glory which is to result from it to the ever-living Architect, we would admit that it is worthy of all the vigilance and care of eternal wisdom and power. In a machinery so nicely adjusted as that of nature, the minutest parts demand attention as well as the mightiest, for by them results the greatest are produced, and their disorder would derange the whole machinery and defeat all its purposes.

Reason distinctly confirms the doctrine of a Divine providence. Let us turn our attention now to some of the arguments which support it.

So far from there being anything in God's character to induce us to doubt his providential government, there is everything in that character to induce us to believe it. Even could the universe sustain and control itself (which we shall show to be impossible), still we may suppose that God would delight himself in watching the operations of the beautiful system, and, especially, that the eternal Father would not withdraw from his rational offspring.

On any other theory but that of a Divine providence, the Deity is left without occupation ; his work is finished ; the universe has no further need of Him, and there is no argument to prove his existence except the negative one, that what is proved to have once existed must be believed to continue to exist, unless the contrary can be proved. The deniers of a Divine providence deny also the fact of any new creation, and, according to their theory, infinite power slumbers, and is to sleep forever ; the Deity has the most complete abilities for universal affairs, yet those abilities are wholly unexercised ; everything that God has made is of use, yet God himself is of no use. We believe, on the contrary, that the Deity is necessary to his universe as He has ever been ; nor can we think with the Epicurean that

He has withdrawn himself into indolence and inglorious repose.

The argument from reason, which proves the existence of a God, proves also his providence. We say that the universe must have had a Creator, because we cannot imagine that it created itself; so we may say that there must be a Divine providence, because we cannot conceive of the universe as sustaining itself. It is as easy to admit that the universe could create, as that it can sustain, itself. Providence has been called a continued creation, and certainly the upholding of the universe requires the presence and exertion of creative or infinite power. We say that the universe must have had an intelligent Creator, because it is everywhere filled with marks of design; so we say that nature, being itself unconscious and blind, cannot of itself execute a wise design, and there must be both power and wisdom present to fulfill that design. If, on the other hand, it be said that nature sustains and controls itself, we say, if that be true, the argument for the existence of a God is gone; then nature might have created itself. If nature has the power of self-sustenance and self-control, thus becoming independent, it is itself a deity, and deserves our adoration as divine; and as there is a difficulty to the human mind in admitting the existence of two gods, nature, in the case supposed, may be regarded as the only divinity; thus, by denying providence, we shall be plunged into the gloomy abyss of atheism or pantheism.

We must believe in a Divine providence, because we know that created things have no power to sustain themselves; it involves a contradiction even to suppose that such a power could be delegated to them. If God sustains the universe by his power, He is, necessarily, present throughout his creation that He may exercise his power, and that universal presence and exercise of Divine power is itself Divine providence. Nature would sink into instant

and utter annihilation if it were not sustained by the arm of an ever-present God.

We are persuaded also that the Divine wisdom is necessarily exercised in the management of the affairs of the universe. We cannot conceive that the Deity could delegate his infinite wisdom to any machinery of his formation; that He has made a machine so perfect as never to need his interference is a thing totally unproved, and will be regarded by most minds as altogether incredible. Since God is, necessarily, present with his universe to sustain it, and thus exercises a providence over it, it is probable that He employs in the providential government not only power but wisdom,—indeed, every attribute of his nature,—even if we could suppose that the universe could exist and execute his purposes without the exercise of all his attributes.

To deny the Divine providence is to ascribe the attributes of Deity to a mere machine, to mere creatures, and even to a mere name. The laws of nature, it is said, produce all the wonders and phenomena that meet our vision. But what are these laws? Have they power, intelligence, and purpose? If they have, they must constitute a person. The laws of nature cannot be anything more than the uniform mode of the Divine operation; when we speak of anything as a law of nature, all that we can mean is, that God is accustomed to do so. If we may reason from analogy here, let us ask, Is there any law of human enactment that can execute itself? It is absurd to imagine such a thing. So we think that it is absurd to think of a Divine law as executing itself. The principle of life in all things must be Divine. You ask if a man may not make a machine which shall accomplish his purposes without his supervision, and why may not God do the same? Man can make no machine for himself that does not require a degree of his attention; but if he could, it would be only because Divine providence acts in sustain-

ing every steamship and grist-mill, and the water and steam by which they are moved,—indeed, all man's machinery. Take away from any piece of human mechanism gravity, electricity, magnetism, and expansibility, and of what use could it be? Now, it is the Deity who directs the operation of these things. You plant a seed; it is God who makes it to grow, although it grows on the spot of ground where you wish a tree to stand. You make a machine; God gives it energy even while it is accomplishing your purposes. A machine of man's origination no more moves itself than the sun, and is just as dependent as anything in nature, for its existence and operations, on the Divine providence. It may be asked, in reply to what has been said, whether secondary causes have no inherent power. If material secondary causes have an inherent power, still it is necessary that Divine power sustain and direct those causes, or, in other words, still a Divine providence is necessary. The power of these secondary causes we regard as constantly imparted to them. It may still be asked whether the human will has not an inherent power. We do not deny that it has; still, the Divine providence sustains the human will in existence, and directs or controls it so as to accomplish the Divine purposes. But it must be considered also that there is a wide difference between the human will and other secondary causes. Will is itself the seat of all power; law itself is will in action, whether that will be human or Divine. In admitting, therefore, that the human will has inherent power, we do not make the same admission as to material secondary causes. Ascribe to secondary causes what power you may, you cannot dispense with the presence of God in the universe as though it were unnecessary to preserve, sustain, and direct all things.

The science of geology bears testimony to the existence of a Divine providence. If the theories of geologists be true, there has been, from time to time, since the first

organization of the world, the creation of new species of animals and vegetables, which proves the direct interposition of the Almighty. Says Dr. Hitchcock: "It is a fact that new organic beings have been created from time to time. The successive economies of organic life that have existed on the earth, and passed from it, do most unequivocally demonstrate the extraordinary or miraculous providence of God." All this shows that the Creator has not altogether withdrawn from the world; if He may interfere in the affairs of the universe, as He must, at the periods of these new creations, we see no difficulty in believing that He may interfere at all times. And here let us say, although it is not necessary to our present argument to consider it, that if God has made new creations in the physical world it is not unreasonable to suppose that He has made and will make new moral creations on the earth, such as are implied in the delivery of oral or written revelations, or the introduction of the schemes of redemption into the world. (I am aware that the truth of the geological opinion here alluded to has been disputed; but I am not yet persuaded that it is not just. If not true, we only lose the evidence of geology.)

The wisest and best men of all ages of the world have accepted the doctrine of a Divine providence. It is found in the writings of the greatest sages of antiquity; and the most eminent of the classic poets have recognized a Divine superintendence over the affairs of men. The most distinguished scientific men of modern ages, as well as the most eminent theologians of all time, have adopted this doctrine. It was embraced by Bacon and Newton. Sir William Herschel says: "We would by no means be understood to deny the constant exercise of God's direct power in maintaining the system of nature, or the ultimate emanation of every energy, which material agents exert, from his own will acting in conformity with his own laws." Jonathan Edwards, whose great force of intellect gives

weight to his opinion on this subject, beautifully illustrates the Divine providence by saying that "God sustains all by a ceaseless replenishment from his own infinitude, as the image in the mirror is upheld by ever-successive rays, like those which first produced it." The opinion of almost all men, both the cultivated and unlearned, on this important subject, ought to have weight with us; it is not probable that they have been mistaken with reference to a matter in regard to which they have so great an interest, and which they have so deeply agitated. Few have been found in the world, who have denied the providence of God, who have not also denied his existence. If we recognize not his movements in the vegetation of the field, in the roll of the planetary systems, and in the affairs of men, we are almost sure to doubt whether we can find Him anywhere, or whether He anywhere exists.

There are many facts in human history which show the presence of the Deity amidst, and his presiding power over, the concerns of men. The righteous are often rewarded, and the wicked are often punished, in the present life: what often seems most unpropitious in the lives of God's people is discovered to be the chosen instrument of their choicest blessings; governments and religions are overthrown and established as though God's hand were directly employed in promoting their prosperity and decline. All this, it may be said, is the result of the operation of general laws; but the human mind is not satisfied with this solution: it believes that there is an infinite mind and an unseen hand bringing about all these minute moral results. Our experience of human affairs somehow assures us, that God is within us and around us, that the world is full of God, and that no event occurs without his direction or permission.

The doctrine of a Divine providence is full of that consolation which man needs amid the vicissitudes and trials of his earthly life; our hearts, the best instincts of our

nature, plead for it. The thought of the Divine presence and government imparts an increased majesty and beauty to nature itself. He has the noblest views at the same time of the Supreme Being and of the creation "who sees God in clouds and hears Him in the wind," who recognizes his hand as rolling the stars along, and marks his footsteps in the mighty waters. To a devout man the universe would seem desolate indeed, if such a man could regard it as a mere machine; it would seem more lonely than any country of wide extent without a human habitation or a living being; beautiful it might be, but it would be a desert to him, and would leave him in solitude. He would regard mere matter, which he could not venerate and love, as the arbiter of his destinies, as a tyrant to whom he yielded a reluctant submission. In such a state of things, when prosperity attended him, he could feel none of the gratitude to God (one of man's sweetest emotions) which comes from the conviction that his welfare has been regarded by an infinite friend; and when adversity overtook him, he could have no assurance that it was especially designed for his good. In such a case, he would feel that he was destitute of Divine sympathy; he could not implore a blessing which his heart coveted, or ask protection from an evil which filled him with apprehension; prayer, the solace of affliction, would be unnecessary and useless; the orphan could no more look to God as the Father of the fatherless, and the widow could no longer regard Him as the widow's God: the persuasion that God's power protects us, and that his wisdom guides us, being lost, we would all alike feel fatherless and bereft of our best support.

CHAPTER VIII.

REDEMPTION PRESENTS NEW BUT JUST IDEAS OF THE MORAL LAW.

IN a previous chapter the attention of the reader was called to the correspondence which exists between the teachings of redemption and those of reason, on the subject of the Divine perfections. In this chapter, it is our purpose to derive an argument for the Divine origin of the plan of salvation from the fact that it presents ideas of the *moral law* that are new and original, and at the same time consonant with reason.

Let us consider, first, what conceptions of the moral law the gospel affords us.

The statutes of Sinai were delivered in connection with the system of redemption ; they were combined with that ceremonial law which had its complete fulfillment in the sacrificial offering of Calvary. The moral law, as published by Moses, is so excellent in itself, so superior to all the maxims and precepts of the philosophers of the most enlightened pagan nations, so uncontaminated by any admixture of false human opinion, so absolutely perfect, that we must receive it as coming through inspiration, and recognize the Divine origin of the book that discloses it and of the theory of salvation with which that moral law is combined.

Christ Jesus himself has expounded the moral law most wisely, and delivered new moral precepts of surpassing purity and beauty. The ethical teachings of Christ, so superior to those of all heathen antiquity, prove that He was inspired or Divine, and that all that He has taught on the subject of human salvation is credible. A great

American statesman desired it to be inscribed upon his monument, that whatever occasional doubts he may have had with respect to it, the sermon on the mount had assured and reassured his heart of the truth of the Christian religion. In the lapse of ages, a Divine teacher had become necessary to restore the written law, as an inspired teacher had been necessary to write it on tables of stone after it had become partially obliterated from the tablets of the human heart. Christ has rescued the law from perversion, restored to it its spiritual meaning, and brought out its hidden lustre. As Jenyns has shown, many of Christ's moral precepts are original and new, and yet such as reason approves. We forbear to dwell on this portion of the argument, only because the subject has been thoroughly exhausted by the ablest writers.

Our Redeemer exhibited the law's excellence in the purity of his life. Such a life, had it not existed, could not have been described. Socrates and Plato—all the philosophers of antiquity—were incompetent to the conception of it. The poets of the world, though endowed with the highest gifts of genius, have produced no conception approaching this in grandeur and sanctity, even in their descriptions of divinity. It was impossible for the men of the generation in which Christ appeared, a generation in which existed no lofty moral excellence, except that which was modeled after the Saviour's, to have conceived a life and character like those of Jesus. Rousseau has truly said, that the conception of such a character is as hard to account for as its existence. No man can describe what he has never felt or witnessed: and inspiration alone could have conceived such a life as that of Christ. We must conclude, then, that the evangelists have described from the life, and that Christ had a real existence. The historic testimony on that subject ought to be above all suspicion; it is abundant and decided. In the life of Christ, the moral law lived and moved and was resplendent. Read in the evangelists the

representations of the eminent virtues, the purity, humility, meekness, gentleness, benevolence, prayerfulness, and spirituality of Jesus Christ. Redemption gives new and original views of the Divine law, since the Redeemer himself gave an exhibition of it, so original and new, in his character and life.

We obtain new views of the Divine law from the plan of redemption itself, as distinguished from both the ethical teachings and the life of the Saviour. At the cross, where the blood of propitiation is shed, and where the sinner is pardoned, the law appears to us in its greatest vividness. It is more awful, as proclaimed amid the stillness of Calvary, than as uttered amid the pealing thunder and flashing lightnings of Sinai.

Redemption teaches most forcibly the *existence* of the moral law. At the cross we are impressed with the fact that man is the subject of the moral government of God. God there interposes in human affairs to assert his authority and to vindicate the majesty of his law; for He that suffers and dies has been born under the law, and now endures its bitterest penalties.

Redemption impresses the mind most deeply with the *immutability* of the moral law. Arguments for that immutability derived from other sources are numerous and conclusive; but none of them impress us so powerfully as that argument which is drawn from the cross. If the moral law could ever have been abrogated or held in abeyance, it would have been set aside for the purpose of preserving the Son of God from the suffering and ignominy, which beat as a remorseless storm on his defenseless head, when He stood the substitute of sinners.

Redemption teaches that the law of God is *inexorable*,—not only that the law must continue to exist, but that it is invariably executed. It is evident that no criminal can, since the Son of God could not, escape its penalty, nor can its prescribed penalty be mitigated in the case of any

human being, since the Son of God was compelled to drink its cup of vengeance to its latest dregs.

Redemption teaches us the *holiness* of the moral law as it is seen nowhere else. A perception of the law's holiness is different from that of its inflexibility, although the idea of the latter may suggest that of the former. If the law appears awful in sanctity, when seen amid the fire and smoke of tempest-wrapped Sinai, it appears clothed and guarded by a sanctity more severe when seen through the blood of Calvary; the angels themselves learn most of its holiness, not in the punishments that have fallen on sinning man, nor in the recorded sorrows of the angels that kept not their first estate, but at the cross.

Redemption teaches that the penalty attached to the Divine law is of the greatest *severity*. It is true that the sufferings we behold at the cross are temporary, but they are the most intense sufferings possible to man; and when the Saviour of men endured the desertion of the Father, He experienced an agony such as had never before been known to a mortal, and equal to the throbs of lost spirits in their prison-house of woe. It is the dignity of the illustrious sufferer, however, that conveys to our minds the full idea of the severity of the penalty inflicted. A Divine being hangs on that cross; and not all the agonies of the pit of ruin, could they be disclosed to our affrighted vision, would so fearfully impress us with the dignity of the law, and the rigor of its penalty, as those piacular sufferings of that victim who died the just for the unjust.

When we consider the vastness of the price of human salvation, redemption convinces us of the *extent* of the jurisdiction of the Divine law, that it has dominion over all the thoughts, volitions, and affections of men, as well as over their external actions. A law whose honor has been so terribly vindicated must penetrate to the deepest recesses of the soul. However we may have imagined that the law exercises its authority over man's outer life, when we stand

at the cross we are persuaded that it extends its empire over the heart.

Redemption also invests the moral law with new *beauty* to the view of men. Here it may be seen, in some measure, as it is seen by the angels of heaven, who look upon it with delight and admiration, as reflecting the benevolence of God, and who regard it as the rule of their happiness, the guardian and preserver of their interests and rights. It appears, at the cross, as a law which demands no further penalty for past offenses; which it is possible to obey, and obedience to which may conduct the soul to glory, honor, and immortality; which may be cherished and loved by men, because they have nothing more to fear from its operations and penalties. This law seems dreary enough to men when seen without the light from the cross; thus seen, it may possess indeed the cold proportions of beauty, but without warmth, and stands before us in the rigidity of death. The law, as it appears to men, is indeed a Memnonian statue, which yields no music until the Sun of Righteousness rises to wake its coldness into melody.

It is not necessary to this discussion to show that redemption affords new sanctions to the moral law; and yet it may be well for us to consider that from the cross of Christ are drawn motives to moral obedience more tender and persuasive, and more solemn and alarming, than can be derived from all the manifestations of Divine goodness and justice with which nature abounds.

It cannot be pretended that pagan philosophers had formed any clear and exalted conceptions of the moral law, such as those which Christians have received from the gospel of Christ; on the contrary, their conceptions of it are inconsistent and obscure in themselves, and diverse from each other. Mankind have indeed universally admitted the existence of a moral law: that law has been written on the human heart, and had that heart never be-

come corrupt, would have been as legible there as upon tables of stone. The uniformity of opinion that has prevailed throughout the world on great moral questions may well fill us with astonishment, and is sufficient proof that conscience is an independent faculty of the soul, and that moral distinctions are immutable and eternal. If a revelation was unnecessary to the heathen to enlighten them on any subject connected with religion, it was on that of man's duties to his fellow-men and his Creator. We find, however, that even with respect to questions of practical duty the heathen nations were involved in the deepest darkness. The law written on the heart had become obliterated and defaced. It cannot be doubted that the great mass of the heathen population had become ignorant of the moral law. In all the pagan world many of the grossest vices were universally esteemed virtues, and many real virtues were as universally condemned: humility was called meanness; meekness was called cowardice; revenge was regarded as honor; and pride was esteemed nobleness of soul. Isocrates was rather a rhetorician than a philosopher; but he expresses a prevailing sentiment of his age and country when he says, "Be not surpassed by your friends in doing kindness, nor by your enemies in doing injuries." From the ignorance of the mass on moral questions we infer that of the philosophers; for, had they been enlightened, they would have dispelled a portion at least of the prevailing darkness.

The greatest immorality and vices existed and prevailed among the pagan nations. The apostle Paul would not have given such a description of the moral corruption of the Gentile world had he not felt himself fully sustained by the facts. We shrink from the revolting picture of pagan corruption. What cruelty! as in the murder of deformed and sickly infants at Sparta; as in the destruction of all female children, except the eldest, which was allowed by Romulus; as in casting old and infirm servants on a desolate island to

perish, as was common at Rome ; and as in the gladiatorial shows. The want of chastity among the heathen is too well known to be dwelt on : their very acts of public worship were deeds of pollution. Sins the most unnatural were not only common among them, but escaped censure, and, in some cases, were encouraged by the laws. From this general corruption of morals we are led to infer the ignorance of the people with respect to the moral law ; and from the moral corruption and ignorance of the people we infer the moral ignorance of the philosophers, since even one man of correct sentiments and opinions would have contributed greatly to the elevation of the mass.

If the philosophers of pagan antiquity were, as we have elsewhere shown, ignorant of the perfections of God, they were also, necessarily, ignorant of that moral law which is a transcript of those perfections. That the pagan philosophers were ignorant of the true nature of the moral law is also evident from the fact that they hoped to be justified by it, while they lived often in very gross violation of its precepts ; they had indeed no adequate ideas of its inflexibility, but believed that either its penalty was a thing of no great magnitude and terror, or might be easily set aside.

We cannot do justice to this portion of our subject without referring to the ethical systems of the most distinguished pagan philosophers. Some of these systems are greatly ingenious, and make, in some parts of them, approximations to the truth, but all of them are incomparably inferior to the morality of the gospel. The philosophers of classic antiquity busied themselves greatly about questions with respect to the nature and foundation of virtue. The theory of Aristippus is, that "Pleasure is the ultimate object of human pursuit, that all crimes are venial, and that nothing is just or unjust, except from custom or law." Heraclitus also taught, that "the end of human life is to enjoy happiness." Epicurus (to give the most favorable account

of his ethical system) held that the foundation and the rule of virtue is expediency. Aristotle has given some excellent practical precepts in morals, but has furnished no complete and satisfactory system of ethics; his theory of virtue is, that it is a mean between two extremes. Says a learned writer: "The single, positive, doctrinal sentence which has been transmitted to us from Socrates is, that virtue is knowing." Plato's theory of virtue is Socratic. He expresses a just and sublime opinion when he says, that "our highest good consists in the knowledge and contemplation of the first good, which is God." Zeno's opinion of virtue is what has been substantially adopted by Butler, that it is living in harmony with nature. Cicero's ethical system is marked by no originality, and is a combination of the peripatetic and stoical systems. The reader may judge for himself how far the ethical systems of pagan philosophers were adapted to improve the morals of mankind. They have been adopted by philosophers in modern ages, and those of Plato and Zeno deserve our admiration. It is probable that none of the ancient philosophers understood the true foundation of virtue, which is the character of God himself. It is remarkable that Christ differs from the philosophers of both ancient and modern times, inasmuch as He rather describes than defines virtue: He controls the world by practical precepts rather than by abstractions.

Whatever the excellence or the defects of their theories of virtue, the moral precepts of the learned and wise men of classic antiquity were sadly insufficient. As far as they were designed to regulate men's duties to their fellow-men they are defective; as far as they were designed to regulate men's duties to their God they are more defective still. The moral precepts of Aristippus and Epicurus have conducted only to the grossest sensuality. There are virtues which Socrates has not commended and vices which he has not condemned; and Plato even justified the doctrine

of a community of wives, and approved of infanticide. We do not complain that these men have given no valuable moral precepts to the world, but that they have combined them with false moral maxims, and that they have not exhausted the subject of morals. Stoicism, while it approves of suicide, is adapted to destroy the gentler and more amiable affections of human nature. None of the moral precepts of the ancient philosophers breathe the spirit of a genuine and exalted piety.

The lovers of classic literature are disposed to canonize the great moral philosopher of Athens. The intellect, which won for him such proud pre-eminence among his countrymen and such devout homage from his illustrious pupil, was undoubtedly of the noblest kind ; he sincerely aimed at the moral improvement of his fellow-citizens ; he has defined well some of the moral duties of men ; he has taught clearly the moral responsibility of mankind in the words, "It is often possible for men to hide themselves from the penalty of human laws, but no man can be unjust, or ungrateful, without suffering for his crime ; hence I conclude that these laws must have proceeded from a more excellent legislator than man." Paganism could produce nothing of human nature superior to Socrates, and no morality better than that which he taught. But to suppose that he understood God's law as fully as it is understood by Christians, that he recognized fully its empire over the heart, that he apprehended the severity of the penalty attached to it, the degree of perfection it requires, and all the duties it prescribes, is to mistake his character and history. A polytheist, doubting the immortality of the soul, may be well supposed to have been in doubt or ignorance with respect to many ethical questions. In vain do we seek in him for any of those warm aspirations after holiness, or any of that devotion to God, which characterized Paul, Augustine, and Melanchthon. Whatever may be said of his temperance, if his admirer, Plato, has done

him justice, he mingled in bacchanalian scenes with no small degree of zest. Socrates was indeed martyred for his virtues; but the people, who put the fatal hemlock to his lips, were too debased in morals to endure even moderate censure of their vices, or the presence of moral excellence far inferior to that which belongs to the least matured of real Christians.

Sir James Mackintosh, in his "Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy," says: "The result of this short review of the *practical* philosophy of Greece seems to be, that though it was rich in rules for the conduct of life and in exhibitions of the beauty of virtue, and though it contains glimpses of just theories and fragments of perhaps every moral truth, yet it did not leave behind any precise and coherent system, unless we except that of Epicurus, who purchased consistency, method, and perspicuity too dearly by the sacrifice of truth, and by narrowing and lowering his views of human nature, so as to enfeeble, if not extinguish, all the vigorous motives to arduous virtue."

Those ideas of the moral law, which redemption affords, but which pagan philosophy could not fully attain, are reasonable and just. To dispute their correctness is to subject ourselves to the charge of folly and wickedness. To prove their justness is indispensable to the argument of this chapter. Viewing it as a separate subject of thought, it is of the last importance to us to understand the true principles of that moral law under which we are placed by our Creator, by which the measure of our guilt is to be determined, and our future happiness or misery is to be graduated,—a law which shall continue as long as rational creatures and God himself shall exist. Without a clear apprehension of the moral law no true conviction of sin or genuine repentance can exist in human bosoms, and men will fail to implore Divine forgiveness so as to secure it, and never obtain that application of sacrificial blood without which there is no remission.

The existence of a moral law is made known to us by the light of nature. Our belief of it is implied in our belief of the moral government of God, the existence of which the author of the "Analogy" has proved so clearly. Says Butler: "In the natural course of things, virtue, *as such*, is actually rewarded, and vice, *as such*, punished; which seems to afford an instance, or example, not only of government, but of moral government begun and established; moral in the strictest sense, though not in that perfection of degree which religion teaches us to expect." It is unreasonable to suppose that God, who governs material nature by laws so well defined, has left the human soul, the noblest of his works, without a law adapted to its nature. Man has indeed a nature which demands a moral law, and the necessity of such a law to him proves its existence; without it he would become more ferocious than the beasts of the forest, ungovernable in proportion to the degree of his intellectual vigor, intractable to human law, and unfit for all the offices of civil and domestic life. Man's responsibility to moral law is also a subject of his consciousness: he knows that nature has implanted in his breast a moral arbiter. Such is the constitution of his nature, that he inevitably believes in the existence of moral distinctions; the principles of morality are inscribed upon his heart.

Reason teaches us to regard the moral law as immutable. Founded in the character of God, it cannot change while He remains unchanged; adapted to human nature, it cannot be altered while that nature continues essentially the same. To alter it were to abrogate it, and leave man destitute of law suited to his nature and corresponding with the character of his infinite Ruler. We may as easily conceive of the repeal of the great mathematical principles of the universe as of those ethical principles which are as eternal; redemption itself could be accomplished only in accordance with them.

Reason teaches that the moral law is as inexorable as it

is unchanging. The law includes its penalty; and if guilt were permitted to escape punishment the law itself would be abrogated. Nor can we suppose, in any case, that the Ruler of the universe would permit a law, which He has proclaimed so solemnly in our nature and his providence, to be violated with impunity. We must expect moral and physical laws to be executed with the same uniformity.

Conscience teaches us that a law promulgated by a holy God, and designed to secure homage to himself and promote the everlasting holiness of his creatures, must be invested with an awful sanctity. The feeling of solemnity and reverence, which it is proper for us to cherish with respect to the moral law, is altogether different from that admiration which we entertain for physical laws, however vast and extended their operations and results.

The belief is reasonable that the moral law extends its jurisdiction over all men's thoughts, volitions, and affections, over the entire moral man. We cannot believe, after the Scriptures have made their suggestions to us, that men are responsible for only their external actions. If men were not responsible for their opinions and affections, there would be no justice in holding them accountable for their actions, since the latter are infallibly determined by the former. Besides, God sees as distinctly what occurs within men as what occurs around them, and thoughts, volitions, and feelings appear to Him as the acts of a moral agent. Men hold each other responsible for their purposes and affections, as far as they can ascertain them, which proves that whatever passes within them is a fit subject of moral responsibility. Let the man within the breast decide whether every secret thing, every guilty purpose, and every cherished lust ought not to be called into judgment.

Reason and conscience alike declare that the penalty attached to the Divine law must be very severe. It is found necessary to attach to some human laws as severe penalties as human power can inflict; and it is reasonable

to suppose that the Divine law, so holy, and established for purposes so valuable, has attached to it some great penalty. Its penalty must be severe indeed if it is to be measured by the sanctity of the law, by the extent of its authority, by the degree of happiness which obedience to it confers, or by the dignity of the eternal Lawgiver himself. An offense committed against an infinite law by an immortal being would seem to demand a punishment of infinite duration. It is, sometimes, imagined that the severity of the penalty of the law will be diminished, in consideration of human weakness. Man's weakness, however, let it be considered, is moral; were his affections all right with God, he would possess as full ability to obey the law as the most powerful of the seraphim. Moral impotence cannot protect men from punishment; on the contrary, they become guilty or liable to punishment in proportion as they become morally weak. If moral impotence could be justly pleaded as a ground for exemption from the penalty of the law, the greatest of sinners would be the most excusable, and men would absolve themselves from their obligations to the law by a persistent and violent infraction of it.

Reason affirms that the ideas of the beauty of the law, which we acquire at the cross, are just. The law, though an object of terror to the guilty, possesses an intrinsic loveliness. In every physical science there is poetry, because the laws of physical nature are beautiful in their operations; they who understand it perceive great beauty in the civil law; there is beauty everywhere in the workmanship of God. Especially may we expect to find beauty in the law that is so delicately adapted to the moral constitution of man, whose effects are as beneficent as those of the whole code of physical laws, and which reflects so brightly that Divine character that is the perfection of beauty, as it is also the sum of all excellence and the acme of all grandeur. The contemplation of the moral law furnishes more exquisite delight than the study of other

science, because, while it exercises the intellectual powers, it also awakens the profoundest moral emotion. Devout men have felt the law to be sweeter to them than the honey-comb; and, doubtless, the angels derive from their survey of it no small portion of their exalted and enduring bliss.

We have seen that the gospel gives new and just views of the moral law. If the most learned and profound of pagan philosophers failed to attain just conceptions of that law, their ignorance must be ascribed to the inability of the human intellect, without the aid of revelation, to reach the truth on this important subject. How, then, has the gospel effected what philosophy could not achieve? The answer is, the gospel is a revelation from heaven. It is a mirror which God holds up before the world, from which to reflect the lineaments of his holy and perfect law. Redemption forces the assent of the human conscience to its moral utterances; and every system of morals, which receives, at this day, the approbation even of infidels themselves, is in conformity with the gospel,—facts which prove to us that the gospel has a supernatural power to enlighten the world; from that power we infer the Divinity of its origin. Thus we see reason acknowledging its past ignorance, approving the discoveries which it could not make, and paying its homage to redemption as Divine.

CHAPTER IX.

REDEMPTION PRESENTS NEW BUT JUST IDEAS OF THE DEGREE OF MAN'S GUILT AND THE NATURE OF SIN.

REDEMPTION attests its Divine origin by affording new and at the same time just views of the fact, nature, and extent of human depravity. It is manifestly not impossible that a record should exist on earth, which should describe with such accuracy the nature and secret workings of the human

heart as to leave no room to doubt that no mere man, however extraordinary, is its author, and that it can be nothing less than a revelation from heaven. Such a record is the gospel. The reasoning of the woman of Sychar was just when she said, "Come see a man, which told me all things which ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

Redemption does much towards revealing human sinfulness by the exhibition which it makes of the moral law. It lays the law before the mind of man, and charges him to compare his character with its precepts, and decide to what extent he has transgressed the statutes of God. The sacrifice of Calvary seems also to possess a power of producing directly in the human heart a conviction of its depravity.

The argument of this chapter, though similar to, is different from that of the preceding. If it were the same, let it be considered that it is worthy of repetition. There is no subject that it becomes us so deeply to ponder as that of human wickedness. It lies at the base of all true theology. They who form erroneous conceptions of their moral character are sure to embrace other dangerous and destructive heresy, while they who distinctly perceive their depravity are always orthodox, when they possess the means of intelligence, with respect to Christian doctrines. It is our aim, at this time, not merely to inform the understanding, but to move the conscience, of our reader. Conviction of sin is indispensable to the attainment of piety; without it orthodoxy fails to extend its influence beyond the intellect, external morality is a lifeless form, and devotion itself is the mere excitement of unsanctified passions, or a poetic reverie. Men may be convinced to some extent of their sinfulness in a variety of ways: conscience often bears testimony to it in tones too decided to pass unnoticed; the judgments of God, experienced, apprehended, or witnessed, sometimes lead men to contemplate it; the law of God, as it flashes from Sinai, often startles the soul into a consciousness of it. But the surest means of conviction of sin is

a survey of redemption; the most thorough and genuine, the only adequate, repentance, is produced at the cross. If man fails to discover his depravity, the whole scheme of salvation is unintelligible and useless to him.

Sin is not a pleasing subject of thought, yet in every way it is proper to contemplate it. Many important facts in human science, which contain no especial beauty, awaken an interest in reflecting minds. When the trembling earth opens its ponderous jaws and swallows up cities, fertile fields, rural habitations, and thousands of human families, we inquire into the causes of the earthquake and into the extent of its ravages. The chemist examines the deadly nightshade and the poisonous arsenic, and describes their properties. The nature and effects of miasma have interested physicians in all lands. Pathology is not only an important, but a deeply interesting subject of study. Legal men inquire diligently into the causes, the proper punishment, and the modes of the prevention, of crime. Why should men survey the physical and turn away from the moral disorders of the world? Why should they not study the pathology of the soul? Why should crime interest us, while sin is a neglected subject of thought? The subject of sin, with its desolations so widespread and of such immeasurable duration, has a gloomy sublimity. Men turn away from it only because the survey of it assures them that they sustain to God relations full of terror. It is not a little remarkable, that with all his varied learning and boundless powers of imagination, the greatest of epic poets has not succeeded in making the fall of man an interesting theme. Although he represents it chiefly as a mere disaster, he suggests too forcibly the idea of human depravity to permit the history of its origin to afford delight. The moral condition of the human soul is a proper subject of scientific investigation. Let us be willing to see sin as it appears in redemption, that we may value and accept the pardon of it, and the remedy for it provided in the gospel.

What does redemption teach us with respect to human depravity? It teaches us the *fact* that man is depraved. Christ came into the world to reconcile man to God, to remove from the human breast a deep-seated alienation from God. Nature teaches the guilt and moral corruption of man; but redemption, if it was not the first to discover human sinfulness, renders it more manifest. It shows that sin is more than a misfortune, that it is something for which men are fully and deeply responsible. The most thoughtless observer may perceive that a great *moral* transaction occurs at the cross. Man's responsibility and guilt can be no longer doubted, when we see the most exalted being of the universe placing himself under the law and suffering its penalty that man may be absolved from punishment. No man, who believes in the atonement, can pretend that human weakness excuses human wickedness, or that sin is, as pantheists think, without culpability, as a necessary part of a process of universal development. Reason and conscience, all the pagan religions and all history, might have erred in pronouncing man guilty before God, but the question is now forever settled, since the Son of God has come into the world to bear the penalty of human guilt. It may be also said that the perfect man Christ Jesus, who resembles all other men in the essential qualities of human nature, proves, by his very presence, that depravity is accidental and not necessary to man, and that it is the cause of his deep degradation.

Redemption teaches that man is totally depraved, that every spark of holiness in his bosom has been extinguished. Whatever doubts have been entertained on this subject ought to be dismissed in the sight of the cross. The gospel teaches that men are redeemed *wholly* through the merits of Christ. If, however, they are partially holy and not utterly depraved, their actions possess some degree of merit, and they can accomplish something in the work of their justification, and something, too, by their unaided

strength, in the work of their moral renovation. An infinite Saviour would not seem necessary to save men from a partial corruption; nor could it be said that men are saved only through mercy, if they are saved partly through their own merits and natural strength. In other portions of this volume it is shown that Divine revelation has clearly taught that the human race has lost its original rectitude and departed far from God, so that love to the Supreme Being is a stranger to the human heart, and all the actions of men are vitiated, from the absence of an element of holiness.

Redemption teaches the magnitude of the evil of sin. The moral corruption of man might be proved to be entire, while the degree of the turpitude of his offences, the exceeding sinfulness of his sin, failed to be perceived. In the Scriptures, all the language and imagery are employed that are adapted to induce us to regard sin as the greatest possible evil. The sacrifices of the Levitical law impress us with the idea of the malignity and ill-desert of sin, and its hatefulness to a God of holiness, because they teach us that death is the necessary penalty of sin,—the death of the animal victim that is substituted in the place of man, and the death of the human transgressor. But when we go to the cross and see the victim that there bleeds, and learn the dignity of his nature and the intensity of his sufferings, hearing Him cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” we are convinced of the demerit of sin and the extent of its inroads on human nature to a degree to which all the sufferings experienced by men, and the sufferings of lost spirits, could not convince us. Were the death of Christ, as some imagine it, designed as a mere dramatic exhibition of the evil of sin, how completely does it accomplish its purposes! It is, however, a real atonement, intended not only to exhibit the Divine justice, but to remove the Divine wrath from the soul of the sinner; that human guilt must be intensely evil, and deeply abhorrent

to God, which none but an infinite being could bear without sinking into perdition under its pressure. We may well imagine that the angels of heaven gather round the cross to obtain new views of the evil of sin: they knew what ruin it had wrought on the happy pair whose bliss they had watched in paradise; they remembered the day when their own companions in glory fell from their high estate, and were driven in disgrace from the celestial throne; and they knew something of the eternal woes of the fallen. But when they saw the humiliation and agony which sin cost the Son of God, they were amazed at its magnitude, and shrank back with abhorrence from it as never before. Many human minds form their first conception of sin as the greatest of evils, as the thing most hateful to God, and more to be deprecated than all physical disasters, only when they learn that the Son of God endured the penalty of it, until his human nature could endure it no longer. That which God has taken such pains to remove must be a most terrific evil,—that sin, to battle with which the eternal majesty bowed the heavens and came down, assuming human nature, and investing itself with sorrows hitherto unknown in the history of an apostate and accursed world! Men may refuse to give credit to the gospel; no man can believe it without standing appalled before the magnitude of the evil of sin, and without being impressed with the magnitude of his responsibilities as a being endowed with a nature capable of enduring so deep a ruin, and of incurring so much of the Divine notice and displeasure.

Redemption also teaches man's moral impotence,—that his sin has so powerfully enchained him that he can, by no effort of his own, break its fetters. Sin sits an incubus, which nothing but Divine grace can remove, on all our faculties. The necessity of the interposition of a Divine Redeemer settles the question of man's moral inability without supernatural aid.

The moral responsibility of man, despite his moral ina-

bility, appears in redemption. It is indicated in the sufferings of Christ; for, if it were unjust to hold man responsible, it were equally so to impute his guilt to a substitute. From the fact that Christ has become responsible for the payment of the penalty of the sins of those who believe in Him, we infer that sinners are naturally responsible for their acts, whatever may be the degree of their moral impotence. Nor is all the moral responsibility of the believer transferred to Christ: every man on earth is as really a responsible agent as Adam was in his primal innocence, or as an angel is at the heavenly throne.

The next point in our argument is, that the philosophers of pagan antiquity did not possess those ideas of the extent of man's depravity which the gospel affords; or, in other words, that redemption furnishes new views of sin.

It will probably be conceded that the heathen generally have not had those ideas of sin which revelation presents before us. Vast multitudes in pagan lands have felt, indeed, that they labored under some great moral disorder, and have been so convinced that the Divine displeasure was brooding over them that they have stood dismayed at the prospect of death and the judgment. For the most part, however, the heathen have not perceived clearly the justice of the Divine anger towards them, and have been only partially acquainted with the cause of it: they have dreaded the retributions of God with the same feelings with which they feared physical calamities, which they ascribed to no moral cause; they trembled before the Divine power, while they failed to perceive the Divine justice. Those of them who most sincerely acknowledged their sinfulness looked only on their exterior acts as the cause of their exposure to the Almighty's vengeance. Of the corruption of the heart, and the malignity of those sins which are committed in the secrecy of the soul, they were almost ignorant. Knowing little or nothing of the Divine holiness, it was impossible for them to form a distinct conception of the

nature of sin. It is not reasonable to suppose that they repented of or even condemned those vices which they ascribed to their gods. It is said that the word *holiness* is not found in the vocabularies of modern heathens. The very remorse of the inhabitants of pagan lands, though gloomy and terrible, is shapeless and undefined.

The philosophers of antiquity were almost as ignorant on the subject of sin as the people; they certainly had no such ideas of it as are found in the gospel. They utter no lamentations over man's moral ruin, and seem not to have been aware of it. When they speak of virtue, they have reference almost always only to man's relations to his fellow-man; and when they speak of vice, they, for the most part, refer to only external actions. Certain evil passions met their disapprobation, but they did not perceive to what an extent the action of most of man's affections is unhealthful and hurtful. Sin appeared to them as imprudence, or as an inconvenience, rather than as an offense against infinite holiness. When they discussed the question of the origin of evil, it was of physical rather than moral evil that they thought. When do we find them crying out after personal holiness, and lamenting the corruptions of the heart? Some of them, doubtless, felt the need of a heavenly instructor to teach them the nature of God and virtue, but none of them perceived that Divine power is necessary to repair the moral ruin of man. Cicero, who in his "*De Officiis*" has given as important instruction in morals as any heathen philosopher, evidently regarded the state of his affections and his whole moral nature, as well as his exalted talents and eminent services to the republic, with the utmost complacency: his writings breathe not one penitential emotion in view of sin. We might have presumed that the more considerate of the heathen, surrounded as they were by the idolatries, perfidies, frauds, and all the crimes of paganism, having seen man in his worst estate unmitigated and unrestrained by the gospel, would form

some just apprehension of human depravity ; but they were blinded to man's moral condition, and returned even from scenes of gladiatorial butchery boasting of the moral dignity of human nature. Pelagianism is only the re-utterance of pagan philosophy on the subject of man's moral estate. Oh, had the philosophers of antiquity understood the true nature of man, as his apostasy has left him, they could never have indulged in their day-dreams of human perfectibility or their elysian visions of future rest ! It was indeed impossible for men, whose views of the Divine perfections and the moral law were so obscure, to form any adequate conceptions of the evil of sin : they did not understand that it has penetrated to the very core of the soul, polluting and withering all man's faculties and affections, and that, whether it does or does not break out into palpable transgressions, it deserves the heaviest retribution from the Sovereign against whom it is committed, and brings along with it inevitably a perpetuity of sorrow and degradation.

Reason assents to those ideas of human depravity, which are learned at the cross, and were unknown to the philosophers of pagan antiquity ; any ideas opposed to them seem eminently unreasonable. We have already shown to some extent the testimony which reason bears to the corrupt moral estate of man ; we call the attention of the reader to the same subject again,—a subject as important as any that can be discussed, and coming properly within the domain of philosophy.

Human nature is manifestly fallen. That human beings are born in a corrupt moral estate is a fact that cannot be questioned : every man acknowledges his guilt ; for reason assures us that we have violated the laws of God ; our consciences convict us of sin. Experience has shown us that human beings are governed by inordinate appetites and sinful affections, from the earliest period of their existence. The history of past ages, and our knowledge of the various races of mankind, persuade us that the existence

of sin is universal among men ; for, although they are born with different degrees of talent and genius, and some of them, from their birth, are destitute of some sense or faculty, sin is the inheritance of them all. Man must have fallen to his present degradation, since it cannot be believed that a being, such as we find him, came directly from the hand of an infinitely holy God.

Reason approves what redemption teaches, with respect to the *magnitude of the evil of sin*. An offense against the rightful Sovereign of the universe,—a Being of infinite goodness, justice, and truth, the Father of spirits,—the renunciation of his authority, contempt of his wishes, a meditated blow at his throne and his very existence, must be regarded as the greatest possible evil. The infraction of a law which is as eternal as God himself, and as immovable as the basis of his throne,—the one law of the great moral empire which maintains its dignity and constitutes its security, and obedience to which would spread safety and happiness through the universe,—is an offense the very greatest that the imagination can grasp. The vastness of the evil of sin is evident from the ruin which it has wrought. It has blinded the conscience, making the light within us darkness ; it has perverted the will ; it has disorganized and debased the affections ; it has blighted the intellectual faculties, clouded the understanding, vitiated the taste, enfeebled the imagination, and extinguished a thousand intuitions that belonged to primeval man ; it has inflicted on the human race innumerable physical evils : if reason fails to satisfy us that physical death is the consequence of sin, it certainly assures us that sin is the source of many of the severest bodily diseases and sufferings that men experience. Man is not the being that proud, false philosophy has regarded him, but an outcast from God, and a sufferer in all his interests, from the immedicable taint of sin.

The sins, which men have been constantly committing for so many ages, prove that human nature is very deeply

depraved. More than that is true: man's depravity is total. Sin has deranged all the moral machinery of man; there is not a faculty or an affection of human nature that it has not corrupted. Let us be understood, however, when we affirm the total depravity of man. We do not mean that men are as bad as they can become: men are not demons, and even demons may become worse. We do not believe that the human conscience has lost all of its original power. We acknowledge the existence in human nature of many amiable instincts. Many unregenerate men, we concede, have manifested a rectitude and an integrity towards their fellow-men which no temptation seemed able to shake. In calling human nature totally depraved, we mean that unregenerate men are entirely destitute of the love of God; and that love being the necessary motive to all holy action, the absence of it renders everything in man unacceptable to God. Benevolence may be cherished, and honesty may be practiced, while the heart is in a state of alienation from its Divine Sovereign. The agent himself may be altogether corrupt, while the actions he performs have the form of virtue. It cannot be proved that all mankind are entirely selfish; nor is it necessary to prove it in establishing the doctrine of man's total depravity. Acts of disinterestedness may be in all respects sinful, and certainly have no holy character when performed by an agent over whom love to God has no habitual control. Some affirm that men may love the Supreme Being without the assistance of Divine grace. Let it be considered, however, that to enjoy the bounties and to admire the laws of nature is not necessarily to love God himself; the enjoyment and admiration of these is consistent with the most perfect atheism. Nor is it loving God to love a false conception of Him. We can settle this question, as to man's ungodliness or destitution of the love of God, by an appeal to the consciousness of every man whom grace has not regenerated.

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The ideas which redemption affords of human depravity are evidently the most just, since they are always cherished by men in their best moral moods; are ever found in alliance with the warmest and sincerest piety; are promotive of the most profound repentance, the deepest dependence on, and the most fervid devotion to, God; and most certainly produce the highest moral elevation of mankind.

We have seen that without a revelation men did not discover the real extent of their depravity. We have also seen that redemption makes known the moral corruption of man as it really exists. It has been shown, in this chapter, that it is not any new revelation of the moral law apart from the atonement, but the revelation of it which is made in the atonement, that affords these new discoveries of the extent and the evil of sin. We conclude, then, because it makes these new discoveries of man's moral estate, that redemption is Divine. The gospel, by transcending all philosophy in its knowledge of human nature, proves that its power is supernatural, and that its source is heavenly. Inspiration has revealed that system of religion which has itself revealed so clearly the hitherto undiscovered nature of man. When we ask, how did the illiterate apostles obtain a view of human sinfulness at once so new and so just, we are compelled to reply, they must have been inspired. If the apostles were inspired, redemption is true.

CHAPTER X.

REDEMPTION ATTESTS ITS DIVINITY BY THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF "CHRIST CRUCIFIED."

THE Divine origin of redemption is attested by the fact that it has produced the most striking effects by means wholly unexpected, and that seemed totally inadequate. Any system of religion that teaches the importance of holiness, if it maintains itself in a world so uncongenial to moral purity as this, for that very reason deserves our confidence ; and any system of religion, that causes holiness to spring up and flourish on the arid and desolate soil of the human soul, attests its Divinity by the fact. The gospel, which aims at the universal diffusion of holiness, has maintained itself in the world, and produced abundantly among men the peaceable fruits of righteousness. It has also this peculiarity, to which our attention is now called, that it maintains and propagates itself by means which, in all human probability, were fitted to effect its overthrow, and purifies the heart through the instrumentality of dogmas which, previous to experience, seemed only adapted to produce a deeper moral corruption. We affirm that only *inspiration* could have directed the employment of such means of establishing a religion and elevating man's moral nature. Uninspired men would never have thought of employing such means for the attainment of such ends ; or if men, without the gift of inspiration, had employed such means of founding a religion and diffusing holiness, we cannot believe that they would have been successful in their undertaking.

We design in this chapter to show that the publication of the fact of *Christ's crucifixion* has been the means of preserving, propagating, and giving success to the Christian religion; and thence to derive an argument for the Divine origin of the gospel.

It cannot be denied that the author of the Christian religion designed the fact of his crucifixion to be made known to the world; although He foresaw the violent manner of his death, He never intimated a wish that it should be disguised; indeed, the mode of his death was embraced in that system of religion which He desired to be proclaimed to the world. All who are acquainted with the history of the men through whose agency Christianity was at first published and established, know that "Christ crucified" was the constant theme of their discourse, in public and in private alike. The fact of Christ's ignominious death was proclaimed by his apostles not only in Jerusalem, where it was well known, but at Corinth and Rome, where it was scarcely known at all. The preaching of the first Christian ministers was called the preaching of the cross. The greatest of the apostles, alluding to his public ministry, exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." This theme gave to their feelings the intensest fervor, and opened their lips to the flow of their most thrilling eloquence.

Christ and his apostles designed the manner of his death to be made known as a means of establishing his religion in the hearts of men. That such was Christ's design is intimated in the words, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." It was not from any paucity of ideas that the apostles referred so often to the crucifixion of their Lord: their new and wonderful religion furnished in rich variety themes for eloquence and argument; they might have dwelt on other portions of Christ's beautiful life than the close of it; or they might have confined their discussions to the subjects of his sublime theology and

ethics, which entitle Him to the highest place among the world's philosophers. Nor was Christ's crucifixion alluded to by the apostles merely to afford them an opportunity of vindicating his character, or to evince their own sincerity in confessing so unfavorable a fact: they felt that the publication of it was necessary to the success of their mission; that "Christ crucified" was the "power of God and the wisdom of God," the means of crucifying believers to the world, the appointed instrumentality at once of giving currency to the gospel and purifying the hearts of men. It is well known that the ministers of the gospel of every generation have, in their public discourses, dwelt largely and constantly on the manner of the death of Christ, with a view to securing the permanence and extension of Christianity and promoting the piety of its votaries.

The proclaimed fact of Christ's crucifixion has actually been the means of giving success to the gospel. Our argument requires that we consider the influence of the cross: a survey of its efficacy, so powerful and widespread, and continued for so many centuries, is well fitted to awaken the best feelings in our breasts.

The Christian religion has been established in the world; it has taken so deep a root amid human affairs that it can never be overthrown or perish; the hope is not unreasonable that it will become universal. It is an interesting inquiry how this religion has acquired such stability and success. Other means of establishing it have been employed, but the chief instrumentality of its diffusion has been the doctrine of the cross. It was that which penetrated and melted the hearts of the assembled multitude on the day of Pentecost. When the apostles went forth from Judea to achieve conquests more signal and glorious than those of Alexander or Cæsar, they bore with them the banner of the cross; the nations rushed to marshal themselves beneath the blood-stained ensign. It was not the introduction of some new and imposing rites, or of some

easy and flattering system of morals, nor was it the published teachings of philosophy, but the preaching of the cross, that eighteen hundred years ago proved itself more mighty than the most powerful patriotic prejudices, superstitions that had been the growth of centuries, all the arts of a learned and crafty priesthood, and all the political strength of the most gigantic government in the world. It was the doctrine of "Christ crucified" that made mute the oracles of paganism, that made its temples desolate, and, within the period of half a century, converted the whole world to a new religion. It is probable that if the manner of Christ's death had not been proclaimed, Christians would have continued an inconsiderable sect in Judea, or that Christianity would have soon expired. It cannot be proved, and it is not to be believed, that the Christian religion would have made the same progress if Christ's crucifixion had not been proclaimed. From the discourses of inspired men, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and from the epistles of the apostles themselves, we learn how prominent a part the doctrine of the cross bore in the conversion of the world.

It is the story of Christ's death that gives success to the labors of Christian missionaries among modern heathen; it has won to truth the affections of the inhabitant of Ceylon, and warmed the Greenlanders' cold hearts with the love of Christ. No exhibition of the theology or of the morals of our religion, as our missionaries inform us, can arouse the attention of the heathen to it, until their sympathies are moved and their gratitude is awakened by the narrative of the death of Christ. This may seem unphilosophic, but the fact, account for it as we may, cannot be questioned.

It is also true that wherever in Christian lands the preaching of the cross has been lost sight of, the Christian religion has declined in influence and been threatened with subversion. To preserve the church from extinction, it is not enough that the manner of Christ's death be not

denied or disguised, it must be also a prominent subject of thought and discussion. A system of Christian faith (if it can be called such) that does not boldly exhibit the cross, however true its theology or pure the morals it inculcates, fails to make an adequate appeal to the heart. Socinianism owes its want of popularity and success to the little importance that it attaches to the cross. At a time when infidelity began to prevail throughout Britain and America, when everything in the churches was cold, formal, and lifeless, and Christianity itself seemed on the very eve of destruction, Whitefield and his colleagues arose and preached faithfully the cross of Christ; then the whole aspect of the church was changed, religion was revived, sinners were converted, and a tide of hallowed influence was sent forth to run parallel with that of infidelity, and which ultimately became the stronger. Judging from the past, we may well conclude that the preaching of the cross is to be the talisman of the church's future triumphs.

The cross of Christ fosters the piety of his people. It has a sanctifying influence; as every man may determine for himself. Let a man go to the cross, the sight of it will fill him with strange emotions such as have been produced by no other death-scene; he will be inspired with a singular interest in Him that suffers; and while he overflows with pity for the sacred sufferer, he will be persuaded as he never has been before of his own responsibility and guilt. The Christian will declare that the cross of Christ has imparted to him all that tranquillity which is allied with the consciousness of pardon: that it has awakened in him the hope of heaven; that it has kindled within him aspirations after a holy life; that it has actually made him holy. Says Saurin: "When the heart feels a disposition to revolt at the morality of the gospel; when you are tempted to say, This is a hard saying, who can bear it? when the gate of heaven seems too strait for you; when the flesh would exaggerate the difficulties of working out your salvation;

when it seems as if it were tearing the heart from your bosom, in charging you to curb the impetuosity of your temperament, to resist the torrent of irregular desire, to sacrifice a Delilah or Drusilla: follow your Saviour to Calvary; behold Him passing the brook Kidron, ascending the fatal mount where the sacrifice was to be accomplished; behold the concourse of woes which induce Him to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' If you can, hold out against such objects as these."

Our argument requires you to consider, that the antecedent probabilities are that the publication of the fact of Christ's crucifixion would not promote but retard, or altogether prevent, the progress and prosperity of the Christian religion; that it would even strangle it in its cradle. Celsus adduced it as a conclusive proof of the falsehood of Christianity that its author was crucified. It was reasonable to presume that mankind would turn with contempt from the religion of a man who had died a felon's death. A death by crucifixion could never have suggested itself to any mind as a pleasing and popular theme. A death on the battle-field, amid the shouts of bannered hosts and the clash of arms, is a spectacle that excites and animates; but death by crucifixion offends the sensibilities and taste. Cicero said of the punishment of the cross, that "from the eyes and ears and the very thoughts of men it ought to be removed forever."

The manner of Christ's death was adapted to bring his whole character and religion into suspicion. It appears, at first view, eminently disgraceful to Him that He suffered a punishment the most ignominious that could be inflicted by the laws of his country, and such as no freeman was permitted to endure. A Jew, informed of the fact, would regard Christ as condemned by a tribunal of his country, whose decision he was bound to respect and uphold; when a man of a foreign nation heard of this fact, he felt that it would be culpable in him to honor a man who had suffered

so great a disgrace from his own countrymen. It was natural for the conservative men of all lands to shun the radical spirit implied in their becoming the advocates of a malefactor. It is true that good men often suffer in the present life; but it is generally expected that virtue will triumph before the curtain falls and the earthly drama is ended. All men believe in a superintending providence; and men generally think that the miserable do not receive, because they do not deserve, the Divine favor. Suffering is usually a proof of weakness if not of wickedness; and that the Son of God should be the most unfortunate of men, and die a most disgraceful and painful death, appears to the minds of many wholly incredible. It may well be supposed difficult for men to conceive how one having power enough, as was pretended of Christ, to raise the dead and calm by a word the waves of the stormy sea, should permit himself to be led to the crucifixion as the lamb is led to the slaughter. It seems unreasonable to think that He who came to confer on others the richest blessings should become himself a curse; that He who came to confer life on the world should die himself in a manner so terrific. The enemies of Christ, who crucified Him, imagined that their argument against his pretensions was conclusive when they exclaimed, "He saved others, himself He could not save."

It might have been presumed that men of learning would object to the constant preaching of the cross, for the reason that it seemed to throw into the background the great truths of morality; that they would say to the ministers of our religion, we ask you for a reason, a principle, or a law, and you furnish us only a disgusting fact. Everything truly philosophic in religion is found in the cross; but it was to be presumed that men would not find it there. Even in the present age there are ministers of the gospel who, to propitiate the philosophic, leave the cross of Christ out of view.

It may be said that the violent death of Socrates was not concealed by his disciples, and that the philosophy of the great Athenian was not less successful on account of it. There is no parallel between the two cases. The manner of Socrates' death was less disgraceful than that of Christ; it was never made the great topic of public discourses; and it was never involved with his moral system as a necessary part of it. Besides, the philosophy of Socrates never became widely prevalent, and certainly the mode of his death never gave currency to it. Men might not be offended at the weakness of Socrates in the hands of his infuriated countrymen, since he pretended to be only a man; while they might naturally take offense at the weakness displayed by Christ in his death, since He made pretensions to Divine power.

That the antecedent probabilities were that the doctrine of Christ crucified would prejudice men against the Christian religion, is to be inferred from the manner in which it was at first actually received; it was "to the Jew a stumbling-block," because he could not understand how the promised hope of Israel was destined to an extremity of suffering and shame; to the Greek it was "foolishness," because it seemed to him only to express a fact which was destitute at once of philosophy and beauty. Yet the apostles, persuaded that this doctrine is the power and wisdom of God, persevered in uttering it, until both philosophers and Pharisees were subdued by its power.

The effects of the preaching of the cross prove, in more than one way, the truth of the gospel. The apostles could never have known, without the aid of inspiration, that the doctrine of Christ crucified would be effective in establishing Christianity and promoting piety in the world; and that they did know what its effects were to be is evident from the nature of their efforts. Reasons can now be given for the wonderful success of this hated doctrine: it embraces the atonement, which is the foundation of all our

hopes; it awakens the warmest gratitude; truth, which the Holy Spirit delights to bless, is also the natural source of the purest morals and piety. But its nature and effects, however manifest now, could not have been known by the apostles previous to experience, unless they had been inspired; and if they were inspired, redemption is Divine. Infidelity finds it hard to account for the fact that what seemed the probable means of the ruin of Christianity has proved the efficient instrument of its conquests, its spread, its preservation, and its probable universal dominion. Apart from any consideration of the motive which the apostles had in preaching the doctrine of Christ crucified, there is a moral power in the cross,—a power to remove infidelity, to kindle piety, and to secure purity of life, which can be accounted for only by supposing that the gospel is Divine. The cross has a supernatural power, either inherent in it or imparted to it by the Holy Spirit; it bears in its own face the evidence of its origin and its design.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MORAL EFFECTS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY.

THE Divine origin of redemption is attested by the fact that the moral effects of the worship of Jesus Christ are such as result only from the worship of God.

When the understanding is busy with arguments, the affections are apt to lie asleep; yet it is not probable that the Christian can think of his Saviour as a fit object of worship without feeling his whole soul aroused and glowing with sacred emotion. Men have been justly accused of a selfishness which it is painful to witness; but the love, rising to devotion, which the believer bears towards his Redeemer,—so tender and so strong, surviving through all

vicissitudes, and flourishing amid earthly decays,—is a beautiful object of thought: a heavenly affection transplanted to the earth, it yields the fruits and the fragrancy of a plant of paradise. Although the moral effect of the worship of Christ is a subject fitted to move the whole soul, we must not forget that we are addressing ourselves chiefly to the understanding of our reader.

When Christ was on earth Divine honors were offered Him, which He never refused to receive; He also gave no doubtful intimations that He expected and desired to be regarded with the highest affection and homage by his disciples in all ages and countries. During the eighteen centuries which have elapsed since He departed from the world, He has been receiving Divine worship from those who have embraced his religion. All the apostles and first Christians paid adoration to Christ as Divine. The early writers of the Christian church, for many centuries, concur in ascribing Divinity to Him, and represent Christians as paying Him Divine worship. The heathen writer, Pliny, speaks of the Christians of his day as singing hymns to Christ as God. The Divinity of Christ has always been one of the fundamental doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church: although we must admit that the moral effect of it has been greatly counteracted in that church by the worship of the Virgin Mary and other saints. The Culdees in their consecrated island, and the Waldenses in their mountain homes, sang praises to Christ as the coequal of the Father of eternity. It will not be denied by any that, with the exception of an inconsiderable sect, all the churches which were founded at the period of the Lutheran reformation recognized and adored the Divinity of the Redeemer of men: and from that period to the present time Christ has been almost universally worshiped in all those churches. At the present day, Christians throughout the world ascribe Divine perfections to the author of our religion. Unitarians, though distinguished by the elegance of their literature

and their social position, are still, as they have always been, inconsiderable both as to their number and their influence in the Christian world, if, indeed, they can be properly ranked among Christians at all.

The being to whom the Christian feels under the highest obligation of gratitude is his Redeemer, and for Him he cherishes the highest love of which his nature is capable ; he offers as sincere, humble, and devoted worship as it is possible for him to render to Him in whom he recognizes as *embodied* "all the fullness of the Godhead." Ask any Christian, whether you find him in a land of Christian light or of heathen gloom, of whom he oftenest thinks, whom he loves most fervently, and for whom he is most willing to sacrifice wealth, reputation, earthly friendships, and even life itself; and the prompt and heartfelt response will be, Jesus Christ. Ask him the reason of his devotion, and he will reply, that in Christ he beholds the most lovely display of Divine perfections, and that from Him he has received the richest of his blessings,—the forgiveness of his sins, the gift of the Spirit, and the sweet hope of an immortal life. Even in that blessed world, in which the Deity sits visibly enthroned and unveils his perfections until every object reflects their splendor, the redeemed ascribe the most exalted glory, and pour forth the melody of their noblest praise, to Him who has loved them and washed them in his precious blood.

The moral effects of the worship of Christ will be found to be powerful and salutary to a degree such as nothing else on earth has been able to produce. Under its influence, Christians have attained an elevation of character otherwise unknown in the world. Paganism has certainly never produced such moral excellence. Philosophy furnishes no examples of reformation from vice and progress in piety such as have arisen from devotion to Christ. From the worship of God in Christ has sprung a higher moral character than from the worship even of the true God in any

other way. We do not forget the far-seeing faith of Abraham, the meditative love of Isaac, the prayerful and prevailing spirit of Jacob, David's hallowed fervor, or eloquent Isaiah's rapt devotion: their piety has not been surpassed, and rarely paralleled, under the Christian dispensation. It is to be borne in mind, however, that they stand before us as exceptions to the generations in which they lived; the number of the eminently pious under the old dispensation is far smaller than that under the new, or even than that which exists in any one land that deserves the name of Christian. Besides, the saints of the ancient economy were not altogether ignorant of the Divine nature of their promised Messiah; and we cannot doubt that such knowledge of Him as was possessed by early Christians would have imparted to their piety new grace and intenser fervor. The worship of the eternal Father, even as He is revealed by the great Teacher himself, fails to produce the most exalted piety possible to men, if the Divinity of the Son of God is not acknowledged and worship is not paid directly to Him; a fact fully ascertained by a comparison of the piety of Socinians with that of Trinitarians.

It is necessary that God should be properly apprehended, if piety is to be real and the morals pure. It deserves our notice here, then, that the worship of Christ comports with the noblest and most just ideas of the Divine attributes. It has been shown already that no philosopher of pagan antiquity cherished ideas of God as sublime as the Christian's. By no philosopher of modern ages has God been better understood than by the worshipers of Christ. The theological opinions of infidels are not eminently pure; and those of Unitarians are not more elevated than those of men who acknowledge the Divinity of the Son of God. Did Priestley have higher conceptions of God than Pascal? Is the theology of Channing purer than that of Chalmers? The recognition of Christ's Divinity imparts to the mind higher views of God than the denial of it. Christians per-

ceive the attributes of God more distinctly than other men, and for that reason adore Him more fervently. To whom would you go for a faithful delineation of the nature of the Deity but to those writers who have advocated the Godhead of Jesus Christ?

Not only are the purest morals known in the world found among Christians, but among them morals are pure and exalted in proportion to the fervor with which they worship their Saviour. When the Christian would successfully resist temptation, or perform some act of unusual beneficence, he prepares himself for the effort by offering to his Redeemer a more fervid devotion. Search the history of the world, and among the fondest adorers of Christ you will find the most fragrant virtues; consult the experience of Christians, and you will discover that the worship of Christ has upheld and fostered their moral purposes.

Affection for the Supreme Being, which is piety, has been greatly promoted among men by the worship of Jesus Christ. It is even to be doubted whether, at the present day, anything of what may be called real piety exists without it. Ask the Christian at what time he has the most vivid views of God, the warmest zeal for his glory, most of a spirit of obedience to the Divine will, most of sensible communion with the eternal Father, most of superiority to the world, most of heaven in his soul; and his instant reply will be, that it is when he most fervently worships his Redeemer. Christians assemble in the humble meeting for social prayer, sing hymns to the Saviour, offer Him affection and worship, and return to their homes with increased reverence for God. The most fervid piety ever felt this side of heaven has burned in the bosom of the Christian when he has been thinking only of Christ, and marshaling all his faculties and affections to the work of doing homage to Him. The worship of Christ seems indispensable to produce the highest piety possible to men. The Deity, until He is realized in Christ, seems too abstract,

too remote from us, too much like a mere principle instead of a person, to awaken within us any enthusiastic affection; when so realized, He is brought nigh, made palpable to us, and becomes as easily loved as any of the objects that address our senses.

The incarnation of the Son of God is promotive of piety on earth, because it is the great cure for idolatry. Christ compared himself to that temple at Jerusalem, which was made gorgeous and magnificent that its splendors might attract the Jewish people from the idolatries of surrounding nations. The Jewish temple, with all its ritualism, lies in the dust: it is no longer necessary, since the person of Christ, which addresses all our feelings and faculties, and almost our very senses, remains to preserve his people from idolatry in all its forms. Worship in the Jewish temple was, to a degree, necessarily complicated and sensuous; the worship of Christ, as a means of protection from idolatry, has this advantage, that it is consistent with a simple and spiritual form of worship that is greatly promotive of piety.

We have seen the moral effects of the worship of Christ. Let us now advert to the fact that idolatry has never raised, but always degraded, man's moral nature. We admit that pagan religions have seemed to confer on men some benefits. The worst religion which the human imagination can devise is perhaps to be preferred to utter atheism. A nation that should renounce all religious sentiments would sink into the most intolerable vices, become unfit for civil government, and revert to absolute barbarism. But the fact that paganism has conferred on men some benefits, or rather averted from them some evils, only proves, not that idolatry is not debasing, but that atheism is more debasing still; it proves only that some religion is necessary for the human race. Idolatry has never elevated man as has the worship of God; and, in most respects, it has exerted an influence on moral character as disastrous as that of atheism itself.

Wherever idolatry has prevailed there has been one wide

scene of moral degradation. The lands of paganism have been luxuriant and beautiful, and idolaters themselves have sometimes possessed rare intellectual culture, and excelled in military prowess, and even in the arts of peace; but throughout the domain of heathenism the moral virtues have been sadly wanting, and piety almost unknown. In Egypt, where every garden produced its god,—although that land was the cradle of the sciences,—the morals of the people were dark and degraded: the worshipers of brutes, ancient Egyptians practiced bestiality, the most loathsome vice in the catalogue of human transgressions. We read much of the virtues of the classic age. Every scholar is bound to admire the elegant literature of Greece and Rome; to every cultivated taste it imparts an exquisite pleasure. In the classic lands many wonderful examples of temperance, fortitude, justice, and patriotism doubtless existed. The names of Aristides, Regulus, and Cincinnatus are ever associated with ideas of lofty virtue. But, notwithstanding all this, the heart sickens at the recollection of the moral debasement of the inhabitants of Greece and Rome for many centuries. The people of Athens are famed for their devotion to their gods; they were, as Paul said of them, too superstitious or very religious; everywhere throughout their splendid city stood the statues of their divinities and temples erected to their honor; they were proudly pre-eminent in genius and intellectual culture: but none can claim for them any high degree of moral excellence; in the practice of the moral virtues they were not superior to the heathen of the present day; the honor paid to Aspasia, the intimacy of Pericles with that corrupt woman, which brought on him no censure, indicates the moral sentiment that prevailed in the most cultivated city of pagan antiquity. Corinth was one of the most elegant cities of ancient Greece, distinguished by the extent of its commerce, by its opulence and luxury; yet its inhabitants were, to the last degree, perfidious and profligate; they were the votaries

of Venus, in whose temple the ministers were not vestals, but prostitutes. Much has been said of Roman virtue ; but we know that the ancient Romans esteemed courage above all the virtues ; that even in the Augustan age the institution of marriage was little respected at Rome ; that gladiatorial butchery was practiced in that city when it had reached the zenith of its greatness. What has been said by us of the moral state of Athens, Corinth, and Rome, may be affirmed, with equal truth, of all the cities and of all the population of the ancient pagan world.

The low moral state of the ancient heathen may be learned from the nature of their gods ; for men are not expected to be better than the gods they worship. To their favorite divinities, such as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Vulcan, and Venus, the nations of antiquity ascribed the very worst moral character : they imagined them to be vindictive, cruel, and lascivious. Men of lofty moral feelings would never have ascribed such attributes to their divinities. The worship of beings so depraved could not fail to corrupt and degrade all who performed it. In the writings of the philosophers of classic lands you may find frequent confessions of the unhappy influence of their idolatrous worship on the morals of the people. The truth of Paul's mournful picture of heathen degradation has scarcely been disputed, and never disproved ; nor can that degradation be ascribed to any other cause than a low conception of the Divine nature and the absence of a pure religious worship.

The idolaters of the present age are in deep moral degradation : and that even in India and China, where a kind of civilization has long prevailed. It were easy to describe the vices of pagan nations until the heart would sicken. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

To worship anything but God is ignoble, unworthy of man's nature, and depresses all his intellectual and moral

faculties. The worship of the true God, as the contemplation and admiration of infinite excellence, develops and elevates the soul; it also secures the Divine favor, which manifests itself not only in the bestowment of physical blessings, but in that improvement of man's moral nature on which his happiness mainly depends. Here let us turn aside from our general argument to consider that before the coming of Christ the nations of the world needed a new revelation to lift them up from the idolatry into which they were all sunk, and by which they were so much degraded, and to lead them back to the worship of the living and true God.

Our conclusion from the premises in this chapter is that Jesus Christ is Divine, and, by consequence, that the religion which He has introduced into the world is of Divine origin. The worship of Christ, as we have shown, has produced the highest moral effects. This could not have been the case if Christ were not Divine. Such effects as this worship has produced can be accounted for only by supposing that Christ is the most distinct manifestation of Divinity that ever has been made to man, emphatically "the brightness of the Father's glory." That doctrine which secures higher moral results than the purest theism, whether taught by Socrates, or Confucius, or Shaftesbury, or Priestley, attests its heavenly origin by its effects. If Christ be not Divine, to worship Him is idolatry. But the worship of Christ is not idolatry, since it produces the purest morals and piety, while idolatry only degrades the soul. The conclusion is inevitable, that Christ is God.

It might be objected to the conclusiveness of the foregoing reasoning, that Christianity has produced moral effects so mighty, by holding up, for the imitation and worship of mankind, a perfect man. We reply, that the worship of even a perfect man is idolatry, and that we have no right to imagine that idolatry of any kind could produce the beneficent effects which we have ascribed to the wor-

ship of Christ. Besides, how can it be accounted for that the worship of a perfect man has secured purer morals and piety than the purest theism? Unitarians have derived from the Scriptures a theism more perfect than ancient philosophy ever dreamed of; they have adopted the moral code which revelation furnishes; they have admitted the perfection of Christ's human nature: yet their faith has never extended its influence beyond the circle of the intellectual few, and has produced no profound and ardent, if any real, piety, even within the narrow sphere of its influence.

Furthermore, Christianity must be true if, as is admitted in the objection stated, Christ's human nature was perfect. The presence of a perfect man on earth is an indication of the Divine interposition in behalf of the human race that cannot be mistaken: and if Christ was a being of spotless innocence and undeviating veracity, all that He has taught must be received as truth from heaven. The objector may say, that he does not mean to admit the actual existence, but only the delineation in the New Testament of a perfect human character. To deny the actual existence of the perfect man is to ignore the testimony of history. Besides, as we have said before, the conception of Christ's character proves its existence: no inspired man would have, and no uninspired could have, described a human life and human qualities like those of Jesus, if they had not actually existed. Christianity must be true, if it be admitted even that the representation, which it has made of perfect moral excellence in the character of Christ, has lifted men up from the debasement of idolatry, and produced among them lofty virtue and piety. The world needed such a representation; the human reason, prostrated by sin, could never have made it, could never have provided a fit model for moral imitation, or a proper object of man's religious worship. If Christ was Divine, his religion is true. If He was merely a real but a perfect man supernaturally sustained, then also

his religion is true. Even could the absurd opinion be adopted, that He was a myth,—that He had no real existence,—then we say that a myth, which no philosophy could have originated, and which has accomplished for the moral improvement of men what no legislation, learning, or religion could effect, is the product of inspiration, and proves the Divinity of redemption.

There is another mode of stating the argument for the gospel, which is drawn from the moral effects of the worship of Christ. The apostles confidently recommended that worship as the means of making men holy, and accomplished by that means what they designed. Their success was contrary to all antecedent probabilities. It was to be supposed that Jews, as the apostles were, would themselves revolt at the base thought of rendering worship to one who appeared to them as a man; that they never would have imagined that any sanctifying influence could flow from such worship; that they never could expect by recommending such worship either to win to Christianity or to make holy their countrymen, who cherished so deep an abhorrence of the very appearance of idolatry. It was improbable, also, that the worship of a human being would improve the moral condition of those heathen nations whom idolatry had so much degraded. How, then, did it happen that the apostles recommended so confidently the worship of Christ as the means of securing holiness? The only answer is, that they knew through *inspiration* what would be its moral effects; and if the apostles were inspired, redemption is Divine.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MORAL EFFECTS OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY.

THE moral effects of the doctrine of justification by faith only furnish satisfactory proof of the Divine origin of redemption. We presume that this doctrine is so well understood by our readers, that no explanation of it on our part is necessary. It teaches that believers are pardoned, received into the positive favor of God, and obtain a title to heavenly happiness, only through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Although some, who have given evidence of sincere piety, have not held the doctrine of justification precisely as it has been taught by the most approved divines, all who have deserved the name of Christians have believed in a gratuitous salvation, and have looked to the merits of Christ as the sole ground of their acceptance with the offended Deity. The apostles of Christianity taught most explicitly the doctrine that men are justified not by works of righteousness which they do, but through the righteousness of the Redeemer. "We conclude," says the apostle Paul, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." The same apostle taught that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." He speaks of being found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, "but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." It were unreasonable to doubt that this doctrine was the great subject of the apostle's preaching, and that by it he achieved his wonderful successes; it were equally

unreasonable to doubt that all the first ministers of the gospel gave to it equal prominence. Preached by the apostles, and the means of the early triumphs of the church, we must believe that it continued to be proclaimed for a long period among Christians, certainly as long as the church retained its primitive purity. As this doctrine was disputed by none in the first ages of Christianity, it is not taught as explicitly by the fathers of the church as it otherwise would have been; yet it is constantly *impliedly* taught, and often most fully unfolded by them, and enforced with all their eloquence. Clement of Rome, a fellow-laborer with Paul himself, in his epistle to the Corinthians, draws most clearly the distinction between that righteousness of Christ which justifies the soul and that internal righteousness which constitutes its sanctification. Justin Martyr teaches the doctrine of justification by faith only in the following language: "He gave his Son a ransom for us; the holy for transgressors; the innocent for the guilty; the just for the unjust; the incorruptible for the corrupt; the immortal for mortals. For what else could hide or cover our sins but his righteousness? In whom else could we ungodly ones be justified or esteemed righteous but in the Son of God alone? Oh, sweet permutation or change! Oh, unsearchable work or curious operation! Oh, blessed beneficence, exceeding all expectation! That the iniquity of many should be laid on one just one, and the righteousness of one should justify many transgressors." Chrysostom, in expounding a portion of the New Testament, says: "For He says not, He made Him a sinner, but sin, that we might be made not merely righteous, but righteousness, and that the righteousness of God, when we are justified not by works (for if we should, there must be no spot found in them), but by grace, whereby all sin is blotted out." Gregory has said: "He hath transferred to himself the filth of my sins, and communicated to me his purity, and made me partaker of his beauty." Augustine writes: "He was

sin, that we might be righteousness, not our own, but the righteousness of God, not in ourselves, but in Him." Many other quotations might be made from the early Christian writers to the same effect. The Culdees, whose seat was the island Iona, and who from the sixth to the tenth century were engaged in diffusing a pure Christianity through North Britain, held the doctrine of justification as it was afterwards taught by Luther; this we learn from such statements made by them as the following: "The faithful man does not live by righteousness, but the righteous man by faith." What has been affirmed of the Culdees may be also said of the Waldenses, as appears from their confession of faith of A.D. 1120 and that of A.D. 1669, in which last it is said: "That the Lord having fully and absolutely reconciled us unto God, through the blood of his cross, by virtue of his merit only and not of our works, we are thereby absolved and justified in his sight." The church of Rome has, during most of its history, failed to exhibit the true doctrine of justification. In the decrees of the Council of Trent it is taught that men are not justified solely through the imputed merits of the Saviour; and that the works produced in the human soul by the Holy Spirit are meritorious, and justify men before their Maker. Corrupt as the Roman Catholic church was at the period of the Council of Trent, and as it was before and has been since, justice requires us to say that it has always regarded that infused righteousness, which it looks upon as justifying the soul, as the gift of God through the merits of Christ. It is possible that some in the Roman Catholic church, at the present day, virtually maintain the doctrine of justification by faith alone; and that during the long night of papal corruption which preceded the Lutheran reformation that doctrine was held by no inconsiderable number in that church.

This is emphatically the doctrine of Protestants. By means of it Luther effected the great Reformation; he

pronounced it indispensable to the existence of the church, *articulus cadentis vel stantis ecclesiæ*; by the clear and constant proclamation of it he gave the death-blow to the papacy in a large part of Europe. Not only in the Lutheran church, but in all the churches of the sixteenth century known as "the Reformed," as, for example, the Protestant churches of France, Holland, Switzerland, and Scotland, it was received as the very soul of the gospel. It was embraced by the Moravians, the followers of Count Zinzendorf, and has been avowed by the disciples of Wesley. It has been widely enough received, and the character of those who have embraced it is fully enough known, to enable us to trace its moral effects with great accuracy.

This doctrine has produced the most marked practical results; it has been a power in the world; we may say, indeed, that no opinion ever held by men has exerted a more decided influence. It has been favorable to the culture of external good morals, and kindled a flame of piety in the human heart; it has induced thousands to place themselves under the dominion of the Christian religion, who otherwise would have spurned its restraints; it has proved itself eminently adapted to awaken penitence, excite gratitude, and inspire hope in the breast of man. It has been the means of turning multitudes, almost in an instant, from long-cherished vices to the practice of the high virtues that Christianity commands. It effected those sudden and wonderful transformations of character which were witnessed in the apostolic age. To recount all its benefits, it would be necessary to explore eighteen centuries and the habitations of millions of mankind to whom it has extended its motives and its consolations. We appeal to history to determine whether the purest morals and the warmest, most genuine, most rational, and most elevated piety have not ever been found in alliance with it. Baxter, could he speak to you from the eminence of glory which he has attained, would tell you that the instrumentality by which

he effected the wonderful changes in moral character, which occurred in Kidderminster two hundred years ago, was the preaching of the doctrine of justification by faith. Whitefield would tell you that he accomplished the conversion of such multitudes in Great Britain and America by the same means. Wesley would bear similar testimony. This doctrine was preached by John Livingston, one of whose sermons was effective in the conversion of five hundred souls in the kirk of Shotts. In city and hamlet, in the rural sanctuary and in the open field, it has been preached with like glorious success. There is an intimate and necessary connection between it and revivals of religion; those seasons of grace, during which Christians make rapid progress in piety, and sinners in multitudes are converted to God, never occur without the preaching of it, and are invariably produced by the clear and fervid proclamation of it.

This doctrine has produced the noblest specimens of piety. No penitence was more sincere, and no devotion more fervent, than Augustine's; yet, as we have seen, he believed this doctrine. Melancthon, Leighton, Rutherford, Doddridge, Jonathan Edwards, Brainerd, and Henry Martyn are examples of the sanctifying influence of the doctrine of salvation through the imputed righteousness of Jesus. John Howard, so distinguished for piety and beneficent achievements, the prince of philanthropists, at the mention of whose name our souls kindle, is an example of the same influence. Havelock, the brave British soldier in India, and that Jackson who stood with his soldiers as a stone wall to resist the tide of battle, were as distinguished for their orthodoxy as for the consistency and vigor of their piety. In every department of life this doctrine has produced the loftiest characters; in the culture of every grace, and in the practice of every virtue, have they who have embraced excelled those who have denied it. It may have been abused; but what sacred truth and what gifts

of heaven have not men abused? It ought rather to be said that many, who have professed to receive it, have misunderstood it; the right apprehension of it is inconsistent with the abuse of it, for when truly understood, it leads the soul to the presence of the Saviour, and secures that Divine forgiveness which is the pledge and precursor of every spiritual benefit.

The nature of the influence of the doctrine under consideration may be determined by a comparison of the state of morals and piety in the Roman Catholic church with that in Protestant churches; the great majority of Romanists having rejected, while the great majority of Protestants have embraced it. We may justly ascribe whatever of moral excellence has existed among Roman Catholics to a belief in salvation through the merits of the Redeemer; it was impossible for Christ's character and history to be disclosed among a people, without leading a portion of them to apprehend the system of Divine grace. Doubtless some, over whom the papal throne is casting its dark shadows, feel the inadequacy of their own works, and are looking solely to the merits of Christ, to justify them in the day when God shall judge the world in righteousness. Those Romanists who have made the nearest approximation to the doctrine of justification by faith as held by Protestants, as for example the Port-royalists of France, have been most remarkable for the severity of their morals and the sincerity of their piety. In the papal church the doctrine of a gratuitous salvation, to say the least, has been obscured and little understood; in Protestant churches it has been proclaimed plainly and constantly. What has been the result? See what the church of Rome had become before the Reformation: it had sunk into the grossest ignorance of spiritual truth, and become overwhelmed with superstitions; the worship of the Virgin and the saints had been substituted for that of God, the morals of the priesthood had become debased, and piety was almost unknown among

the people. Although the avowed doctrines of the church were not as corrupt then as they afterwards became, the actual immorality of both the priesthood and the people was greater. Nor can it be said that the general corruption spoken of is not traceable to the absence of the true doctrine of justification; it was the legitimate and inevitable result of it. Indulgences, that most fruitful source of sin, could never have been granted if God's mode of justifying the sinner had been understood. John Tetzel could never have arisen among a Protestant people. The doctrine of works of supererogation, from which that of indulgences arose, is incompatible with a belief in the demerit of all human actions, and with a reliance on Christ's merits alone for justification. Establish the doctrine for whose good influence we are contending, and the doctrines of purgatory and priestly absolution instantly and inevitably perish,—doctrines whose moral influence has been so entirely pernicious; for if we are saved through Christ's sufficient merits, no expiatory sufferings are required of us in a future world, and if faith justifies us no human being can take away our pardon or increase its value. Nothing can be more manifest than the improvement of general morals and piety in Europe at the time of the Reformation; it extended even to the Roman Catholic priesthood and people. The moral atmosphere, which had been polluted as by a fatal miasma, at once became purified; piety prevailed as it never had since the apostolic age; countries which had been fettered by the worst superstitions and priestcraft at once rose into the glorious liberty of the children of God. All this mighty change was found in alliance with the doctrine of justification by faith; as all the previous corruption had been found in connection with the denial of it. More is true: the mighty moral change at this time was effected by the publication of this doctrine; it turned the minds of men from popish superstitions; humbled sinners at the cross; converted the hearts of men

to Christ, and cherished within them an exalted piety. The advancement of the people of Europe, at the Reformation, in the knowledge of the physical sciences and arts, in civil liberty, and, indeed, in all intellectual culture, proves to us the healthful moral influence of Luther's doctrine of justification.

Long before the Reformation, it may be proper here to say, the superior purity of morals, worship, and piety which existed among the Culdees, the Waldenses, and the followers of Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome of Prague had proved the superior moral influence of the doctrine of justification by faith only.

Comparing the portions of human society in which Roman Catholicism prevails at the present time with those in which Protestantism has the ascendancy, you will discover the superiority of the latter in morals and piety. How inferior is the moral condition of Italy to that of England! How superior, in all their moral aspects, are Scotland and the North of Ireland, in which the true doctrine of justification is taught, to the Roman Catholic portions of Ireland! In the former may be found industry, obedience to the law, respect for the sabbath, decency, and comfort; while in the latter indolence, insubordination, religious ignorance, poverty, and misery are everywhere conspicuous. If you would come to a proper conclusion on the subject in question, compare the moral character of the Moravians with that of the Jesuits. On the western continent, the vassals of Romanism are in a condition of deep moral degradation as compared with the Protestant population. After all, let it be remembered, that whatever of moral excellence we find in Roman Catholic countries may be traced chiefly to ideas—contradictory and obscure indeed—of a gratuitous salvation.

Our argument requires us to consider that the antecedent probabilities were that the doctrine of salvation through the merits of another would not lift up men from

their moral degradation and impel them along a career of obedience, but that it would, on the other hand, have an injurious moral tendency. It was not likely to receive the assent of the understandings of men, since mankind had been originally placed under a covenant of works, of which they retain some remembrance even in their fallen state. It is a powerful stimulus to the performance of noble actions to know that they will merit and win the admiration of men, or some substantial earthly benefit. From what vices have not men abstained, what sacrifices have they not undergone, what lofty deeds of apparent virtue have they not performed, with a view to deserving the favor of Heaven! To tell men that they cannot, by any sacrifice, by any generous deed, by any act of pious devotion, or by anything that they can do, merit and secure the approbation of the Almighty, seems to be at once cutting all the sinews of their moral strength. To tell them that the Almighty accepts them for the sake of merits so infinite that they cannot be increased by any human worth, seems to present only a motive to spiritual indolence. It was certainly a new method of recommending virtue, to teach that it could never deserve the Divine favor. Philosophy had never taught such a doctrine; on the contrary, it had affirmed that men are to be rewarded in a future life for and in exact proportion to their good works. The idea of salvation through the merits of another, as Christianity suggests it, had never entered the mind of the heathen, for even when they hoped to propitiate their gods by animal sacrifices, they regarded their offerings as deeds of merit. With the examples of exalted piety which Christianity produces before them, not a few in our own day and in Christian lands denounce the doctrine of justification by faith only as tending to licentiousness and disastrous to piety. We may well imagine that when the gospel was first made known to intelligent heathen they objected to it on the ground that one man's obedience could not merit

salvation for another, and that if it could, all motive to moral obedience must be destroyed in the case of him who had another to obey for him.

It was manifestly the design of the apostles, in proclaiming the gospel, to secure to men personal holiness. A religion that fails to change the nature of man, to inspire him with hallowed emotions, and to fit him for a home of purity beyond the sky, is a mockery to human hope, and proclaims its own emptiness and falsehood. Such a religion is not our Divine Christianity. No man can read the New Testament without coming to the conclusion that its aim is to make men holy; it gives indulgence to no vice; it enjoins the practice of every virtue; it represents heaven as a place into which no sin is permitted to enter. If the apostles had not manifestly designed to make men holy, and had not promised to produce a degree of moral excellence never before common among men, their preaching the doctrine of salvation through the merits of another would not seem so remarkable; although, even in that case, we should somewhat wonder at their utterance of a doctrine so well fitted to shake the confidence of mankind in the new religious system.

We have not intended to admit that the doctrine of gratuitous salvation does not appear, when fairly considered, adapted to produce holiness in men, and that right reason does not approve it as a fit instrument of moral improvement. The complete and immediate pardon it offers wins to it the attention of the sinful, secures their confidence and love, and induces them to attempt a life of obedience to God, from which they would otherwise be deterred by the magnitude of their conscious guilt. The hope of an instant justification is the most powerful motive to the acceptance of that gospel, which, when received, reveals every moral obligation, and presents every conceivable inducement, to a holy life. The profound gratitude and ardent love, which result from the apprehension of this

doctrine, produce a spirit of obedience to the infinite benefactor, such as could not result from fear or any sordid consideration of personal interest,—a spirit of obedience, pure and noble, filial and angelic. We may prove now, independently of any historic argument, from its own nature alone, that this doctrine is adapted to exert a holy influence. But, although reason approves it since it has been suggested, reason could not have suggested it at first. As the *a priori* arguments that may be now adduced in favor of it were suggested by an experience of its effects, it is still evident that the antecedent probabilities were all against it.

It is only as it is applied by the Holy Ghost, let it be borne in mind, that the doctrine under discussion produces holiness of life and character; otherwise, it is rejected as unreasonable, or is not perceived in its harmony with other scriptural truths, and leads to presumption. That a doctrine to which men are naturally so much opposed has prevailed so widely, and with so much moral success, is itself a proof that it has been accompanied with supernatural power.

It is time to bring this argument to a conclusion. From the moral effects of the doctrine of justification by faith we infer that it is Divine, and that by consequence the gospel, which embraces it, is Divine. It has, in the face of all antecedent probabilities, produced more good works than any theory ever known among men; has changed the whole aspect of human society, and promises to fill the world with achievements and institutions of beneficence and piety. Whence this power but from God?

From the fact that the apostles preached this doctrine, we infer that they were inspired, and, by consequence, that Christianity is true. They aimed to reform the lives and purify the hearts of men. They employed, as a means to that end, the doctrine of justification through the merits of the active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ. They

were successful in their efforts, although all the antecedent probabilities were opposed to their success. How did they know (and they manifestly did know) that such means would secure such an end? The only answer is, they were inspired. Rational men, unless divinely directed, never could have devised and never would have proclaimed such a doctrine as we have been considering, with a view to lofty moral ends. Reason did not teach the efficacy of such a doctrine; human prudence would have shrunk from it as something hurtful to the morals of men. Redemption has disclosed it; experience has attested its worth. The conclusion is inevitable that redemption is Divine.

The doctrines of Christ crucified, Christ's Divinity, and justification by faith only, so opposed to the prejudices of mankind, yet of such wonderful efficacy, may be said to constitute almost the whole gospel, and singly, but especially when combined, to prove its Divinity.

CHAPTER XIII.

REDEMPTION ATTESTS ITS DIVINITY BY THE DISCLOSURES IT MAKES AS TO
THE NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF FAITH.

WE may derive an argument for the truth of redemption from the utterances of the New Testament with respect to the nature and necessity of *faith*.

It is presumed that our readers remember and understand the scriptural instruction on this subject. Faith in general is assent to testimony; faith in Christ is assent to the record which God has given of his Son. Faith may be regarded as an act of a moral agent; it may also be viewed as a principle which the Holy Spirit implants in the human breast, and from which all acts of Christian belief may be

said to proceed. Some distinguished theologians have considered it simply intellectual: the prevailing opinion among evangelical divines is that it is partly intellectual and partly moral,—intellectual so far as it perceives the truth, moral so far as it assents to and delights in it. That faith is in part moral is evident from the fact, that it is so greatly influenced and determined by the previous state of the affections, as well as by the fact that it controls, to so great an extent, both the affections and will: it certainly has the closest conceivable connection with all that is moral in man.

The New Testament explicitly requires the possession and practice of faith. In attaching so much importance to it Christianity is altogether original. The learned men of pagan antiquity failed to recommend it or perceive its value; the languages in which they wrote contained no word expressive of it. Socrates, in his theory that “knowing is virtue,” had indeed a glimmering of the importance of faith, but that only the faintest. It has been objected to the Christian religion that the author of it seemed anxious only that it should be believed in; that its first preachers were content if it was only professed and intellectually embraced; that it requires only faith. We do not admit the fairness of this objection: we might reply to it that the moral precepts of Christ, which extend to every question of human duty, are the purest ever known on earth. But we do admit that Christ and his apostles attached a transcendent importance to faith; and we affirm that experience has shown, and from reason itself we are led to conclude, that it is the necessary basis of all the Christian virtues and the sure means of securing all that is excellent in man. The question is, How did the first preachers of the gospel arrive at their knowledge of the efficacy of faith? What gave them so philosophic an insight into this subject? The only satisfactory answer is, that they were inspired.

What remains to be done for the completion of the argument of this chapter is to show that it was reasonable in Christ and his apostles to attach so vast an importance to faith, and to make it indispensable to the Christian. We shall inquire into the philosophy of faith; and, as the reader shall perceive it, he will acknowledge that the first preachers of Christianity learned it of God, or at least acted under the direction of God, when they pursued a course so accordant with the nature and necessities of man.

If we were only answering an objection, we might reply that we cannot reasonably object if God has chosen faith as the sole test of obedience to the gospel, just as He chose abstaining from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil as the sole test of obedience to the law. It is not conceded that there could have been any other test of man's acceptance of the gospel except faith; if, however, a thousand other possible tests could be imagined, it is enough to satisfy the demands of reason to know that *this* is adequate and sufficient. But we are not merely answering an objection, but presenting a positive argument for the gospel, derived from those deep but previously undiscovered ideas of the philosophy of faith which it contains or implies.

Faith is necessary in all the ordinary affairs of human life. We might infer as much from the natural constitution of man, and from the relations which men sustain to each other in the world; for man is a gregarious animal, and so constituted as to place confidence in the testimony of his fellow-men, as well as in that of his consciousness, reason, or senses. Experience also establishes the necessity of faith. Every child knows that the largest portion of his knowledge has been derived, not from what he has seen or from his own reasoning, but from what has been told him. The knowledge so derived influences all our thoughts, feelings, actions, and habits. If children had no confidence in the testimony of their parents they would be always offending

against the proprieties of life, and even rendering themselves obnoxious to the laws of their country ; there is no danger to which they would not expose themselves ; they would be in the most defenseless of all conceivable conditions. We receive by faith, or are indebted to the testimony of others for, that knowledge of human history which is so valuable in all the affairs of life, is so indispensable to every jurist and statesman, and gives direction to every human being who has obtained it. A knowledge of geography, of the existence of other countries than our own, of the great cities of the world, such as London and Paris, is deemed important to us ; that knowledge is derived in the exercise of faith. Those courts of justice which are the bulwark of our civil rights, and on whose existence the security of our persons and property depends, are founded on our confidence in human testimony. Destroy faith, and human society would be thrown into confusion and perish, because the number of objects which any one man can see is small, and the facts are few which reason can establish.

The efficiency of faith in the ordinary affairs of life is as manifest as its necessity. A man of well-known veracity informs another that his reputation has been unjustly assailed ; his indignation is at once aroused, and he hastens to disprove or to demand the retraction of the falsehood. A man informs another how he may suddenly amass a large portion of wealth ; the cupidity of the listener is excited, and he begins to use immediately the means suggested for the improvement of his fortune. A man informs you that your wife or one of your children is ill, and you believe him ; your conjugal or paternal affection is aroused, and you rush to your home. Or you are credibly informed that your house is on fire ; and you exert every muscle until you ascertain the fact by the testimony of your sight. Perhaps to the largest portion of the actions we perform, or of the feelings we cherish, we are prompted by faith.

Faith is more necessary in the affairs of religion than in the ordinary affairs of life, because the senses of men, adapted to material objects, do not extend to religion, and because spiritual things are exalted above the reach and expand beyond the range of human reason. Unless miracles were constantly occurring, that which is supernatural can be made known to men only through the medium of faith. There is no reason also why faith may not be as efficient in the affairs of religion as in those of the world.

Faith is necessary to the apprehension of that Divine truth, the knowledge of which is indispensable to the sanctification, and consequently to the salvation, of the soul. It is the office of faith to receive God's written revelation on the testimony of God; it may be called a hallowed intuition of Divine truth. The human understanding, as really blinded as the human heart is perverted by sin, cannot perceive what God has revealed without the faith which the Holy Spirit imparts. It must be borne in mind that man's intellect can no more perceive sacred truth in its proportions, and with clearness, than his heart can love it, without a Divine influence: it is as necessary that man's intellect should be regenerated as his affections and will. Faith, even when considered as simply intellectual, is never of the right kind in the minds of the unrenewed; in other words, the Christian and the unrenewed man not only regard Divine truth with dissimilar affection, but have different intellectual perceptions of it. Without faith in the Scriptures as a revelation from God, they wield no great sway over man's intellect, conscience, or will. We can conceive of no other way in which the Bible can be received as containing a system of instruction and a rule of life, except by believing it. However much a man may be interested in the Scriptures, whatever effect their wonderful narratives may produce on his imagination or their poetry and rhetoric on his taste, and however some portions of it may affect his conscience, unless he has faith in

them as a revelation from God, they produce as little permanent effects in him as the rhapsodies of romance. Faith enables men to perceive the truth. As Chalmers has said, it "bears a resemblance to sight or hearing or any other of the senses, by which man holds communication with the external things that are near him."

The perception of Divine truth is necessary and efficient in securing holiness in men. Some regard this proposition as so palpable as not to demand or even admit of a discussion. Obvious however as it may be to some minds, it has been strangely and sadly overlooked by others; many of the errors of men and most of the indolence of Christians have resulted from a secret denial of or from inattention to it; even in the church may be found those who deride and denounce those who would instruct their fellow-men in religion, as though they were attempting the Almighty's work. Religious knowledge is not of itself sufficient to secure salvation; no amount of it can save men, apart from the influences of the Holy Spirit. Nor is Divine truth always accompanied by the operations of the Spirit of God; nor does it always remove ungodliness and impart right and sacred feeling; generally, however, when faithfully taught, it is blessed by the Spirit and produces the fruits of righteousness. It is certain that human beings are saved (excepting idiots and those who die in infancy) only through the instrumentality of received truth. We adopt the opinion of a sensible writer, that "no man can have the spiritual discernment of a truth which he does not know. The intellectual cognition is just as necessary to spiritual knowledge as the visual perception of a beautiful object is to the apprehension of beauty. Men cannot be made religious by mere instruction, but they cannot be made religious without it. Religion includes the knowledge—*i.e.* the intellectual apprehension—of Divine things as one of its essential elements, without which it cannot exist."

The proposition before us accords with the opinions of

the wisest of men. They have taught the power of apprehended truth, or even false opinions, in controlling the affections and actions of men. Lord Bacon has said that "certain it is that *veritas* and *bonitas* (truth and goodness) differ but as the seal and the print; for truth prints goodness, and they be the clouds of error which descend in the storms of passion and perturbation." All statesmen who would improve the morals of the people whom they govern publish laws, which may be regarded as great truths; all philanthropists who would elevate the moral and social condition of their fellow-men endeavor to impart knowledge as the necessary instrument of their advancement. It is a wise and happy aphorism of Victor Cousin, "Show me the philosophy of a nation, and I will tell you its character."

The importance of knowledge in temporal affairs shows its importance in religion. Error of opinion or ignorance is often fatal to men's best worldly interests; the knowledge of truth is promotive of them. If knowledge or truth is so necessary in worldly affairs, it must appear to be equally necessary in religion, because there is an uniformity in all the Divine dispensations,—an analogy between the kingdom of nature and that of grace.

The history of the world generally has shown how important an agency religious knowledge has been in the elevation of mankind. False opinions in religion, as has been already proved in this volume, have conducted to the vilest immoralities and impieties, while true opinions have rarely failed to beautify the moral aspect of a family, neighborhood, or nation. Searching the records of peoples that have passed away, you will discover that piety has prevailed among them just in proportion as the attributes of the Deity and the scheme of saving mercy have been clearly apprehended. And now, looking over the world, although the impression is painful because ignorance and sin exist and abound everywhere, you find morality and piety flour-

ishing most where Christian truth has been most fully communicated; and where this is absent, you find superstition and fanaticism and penances and sacrifices indeed, but the lowest moral degradation, interspersed with few evidences of regenerated desire and scarcely a trace of piety. You turn away from the scene with the reflection that if truth could only shine on the world its inhabitants would find a pathway from their debasement up to virtue, holiness, and God. The world's history has certainly illustrated the fact that the absence of Divine truth dooms the sons of humanity to the deepest moral disgrace,—to the contempt of all that is spiritual and pure,—to gross idolatry on the one hand, or dark and icy atheism on the other. Quench the light of sacred truth, and what would become of all the amenities and moralities of civilized society,—of all the sweet charities of life,—of your asylums for the poor, the deaf, dumb, blind, and insane? What, we may confidently ask, would become of all your humane laws and those free institutions which Christian principle has founded and cherished? All of them would perish. If a knowledge of religious truth is necessary to the preservation of a mere outward morality and philanthropy, much more is it necessary to purify the fountain of moral action in the human soul: this is evinced by the past history and present condition of the world.

The importance of Christian knowledge as an instrument of holiness has been shown with especial clearness in the history of the church of Christ. Christianity has sanctified and saved millions of souls. How has she achieved her conquests and maintained her authority? Her weapon has been truth; her armor has been truth; her fortifications have been reared on the foundation and built up with the materials of truth. When the church had sunk to the lowest point of depression, when her ministers had become unfaithful and corrupt, when the fires of holiness had expired on her altars, the motto prevailed that “ignorance

is the mother of devotion." What raised up her drooping head, rekindled her extinguished piety, infused into her the warmth of a new spiritual life, and recovered to her the godliness which had animated and adorned her in the day of her pristine purity and power? The communication of religious truth. Scotland is the most religious of the nations, because she is the most enlightened by Divine truth,—Scotland, whose Free Church is so energetic, so liberal, so devoted to Christ, and whose late exode from spiritual despotism is one of the most heroic and morally sublime occurrences in all the annals of Christianity.

It is reasonable to suppose that the perception of Divine truth will be one of the great means of the soul's perfection in its heavenly home. It is one of our best, brightest, most gratifying, and most enrapturing conceptions of heaven, that it is a state of the most exalted sacred knowledge and of vast intellectual discovery, where the mists that have enshrouded and obscured the most interesting subjects here shall be removed and dissipated; where the ignorance shall be taken away, which, by disturbing our understandings, has checked the flow of our affections; where truths, now imperfectly known, shall shine in perfect purity and undiminished effulgence, and truths, now totally invisible from their distance and peculiar to the sphere of heaven, shall shine and blaze on our enlarged vision; where the light of truth, coming from the face of the Deity, shall impress his image more distinctly and with more permanent effect than the light of the natural sun, by the aid of human art, now impresses on the hard metal the image of the human face, or edifice, or landscape. The more we learn of Divine truth in this world, we affirm, the better we are likely to become, the more we are changed into the Divine image from glory to glory; and if this truth had not been expressly revealed or discovered by human experience, we might have inferred it from the

moral transformation which, it is reasonable to believe, is effected by the beatific visions of heaven.

If the knowledge of religious truth in general is adapted to produce a sanctifying effect, much more is the truth as it is in Jesus, or that truth which relates immediately to the subject of redemption. It discloses with the greatest vividness the most lovely views of the Divine character; imparts the clearest perceptions of the sanctity and beauty of the Divine law; awakens a gratitude to God that impels the soul to obey his commands; and kindles a hope of future happiness, without which the moral energies of men would remain dormant forever. The knowledge of Christ is the surest means of human sanctification; without it a knowledge of all other revealed truth will not insure any great progress in holiness. Fallen man needs, more than angels, the touching and powerful motives to obedience which the gospel presents. All the knowledge of truth here spoken of is derived through faith.

What has been said of the sanctifying power of faith in Christ is confirmed by the fact that it attaches the soul to that Redeemer who is the perfection and source of moral purity: a perception of the suitableness and sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, and an actual reliance for salvation on his merits and assistance, it wins and warms to Him all the affections of the soul. We are, necessarily, drawn to Him, more than all others, whom we recognize as interposing for our behalf in the most desperate circumstances, as making every sacrifice for our welfare, as acquiring for, and bestowing on, us blessings richer, larger, and loftier than our most aspiring anticipations. To be attached to Christ is constantly to contemplate his character; and it is impossible to be brought every hour in contact with the highest moral excellence without feeling its power to purify. No man can visit the mansion in which truth, purity, and benevolence reside, without having his worst passions lulled to rest; and it is not strange that no one

can be brought into association with Him who possesses every human virtue combined with the attributes of God, without feeling his own heart glow with sacred emotions. It is natural to imitate what we love; and he that loves the Saviour imitates Him. No moral effort so elevates and cleanses the soul as the imitation of Christ. To believe in Christ is to yield to his beneficence the response of affection; and to love a being such as Jesus is holiness itself.

We have seen the sanctifying influence of faith in Christ; it becomes us also to consider that, constituted as man is, it is impossible to discover how the gospel could exert any moral influence on him without faith in it. Men are repelled from that in which they do not believe. Unless a man has confidence in Christ as the Saviour, he loses the influence of his holy example, and treats with indifference his theology and moral system. The gospel sways the souls of men only when they perceive its fitness to their condition. No man can reverence and love the Divine Being without faith in Christ. Without that knowledge of the mode of Divine pardon which is implied in faith in the Redeemer it is impossible to cherish any positive and profound respect for the Divine justice, if it be believed that the sinner is pardoned. It is only by faith in Christ that men become persuaded that there is forgiveness with God,—a fact of which they must be assured if they would cherish any affection for the Divine Being; for we cannot love one whom we regard as meditating our destruction. Faith in Christ, so far from being opposed to good works and holiness of heart, seems to include them, so certain and so necessary is it to conduct to them; it is at the same time full of moral excellence itself, as the submission of the reason to God's word, and the reliance of the heart on God's provisions of grace.

Faith in Christ receives the promises of God as verities, and thus leads the soul on to heroic achievements. It no

more doubts the future than the past ; it would as soon discredit history as the prophecies of God ; and on this account it invokes and secures Divine aid in every difficulty. It is the parent of prayer, which calms the soul in every trial, nerves it for every conflict, and secures to it, in the performance of all its hallowed purposes, omnipotent aid. It has proved itself more powerful than any of those active powers which nature originally implanted in the soul.

Faith in Christ is adapted to expand, develop, and improve all man's nature. It exalts every faculty of the human soul. Surveying the most sublime and sacred truths in their just relations, it, more than philosophy, invigorates and rectifies the understanding ; not by any logical process, but, as it were, intuitively, it conveys to the mind truths as important as those primary truths of science which are the necessary basis of all thought and reasoning. It elevates and purifies the conscience by disclosing to it a perfect law and presenting new motives to moral obedience. It brings the human will into conformity with the Divine ; for it implies an assent to God's method of pardoning sinners, which makes every other submission to the Divine commands easy and delightful. We have already seen its influence on the affections of man. It produces love to God ; and when piety is restored, benevolence to man naturally ensues. Faith inspires benevolence ; because it reveals its beauty, and its necessity to the welfare of the universe, and discloses the authority of that volume which exhibits it as an indispensable virtue. As it influences, to the degree and in the mode described, the internal man, it may be expected to shed a glory over the whole outward conduct of the Christian. It renders him externally devout, impresses a character of integrity on all his commercial dealings, and makes his pathway bright with beneficence. History attests that the purest moral principles, the sweetest piety, the most invincible fortitude,

a benevolence which, if it were universal, would change the earth into a paradise,—that the loveliest, holiest, and most valuable virtues and deeds, have been the fruits of faith.

Our discussion would not be complete without considering what may be called the philosophy of faith as it appears in connection with man's justification. We do not absolutely affirm that it was impossible for God to restore men to his favor without demanding faith in the atonement, but it is manifest that the requirement of it as a necessary condition of pardon is reasonable. Faith is, as we have seen, partly intellectual. Without faith it would be impossible for men to know either the fact or the mode of their acceptance with God; and it is not reasonable to suppose that God would effect so great a change in man's relations to himself, as is implied in his justification, without his knowing both the fact and the mode in which it is effected. Faith, as has been said, is partly moral: it includes an assent of the will to the plan of salvation; and we affirm that it is not reasonable to suppose that God would effect a change of the whole moral *status* of a moral agent, such as is effected in justification, without requiring his assent to it. Faith in Christ is a reasonable demand because it is an intelligence of the fact and mode of pardon and acceptance with God, and also an approbation of and assent to the way of salvation. It may be objected by some that previously to the sinner's exercise of faith a radical change in his nature is effected by omnipotent grace, in which he has no agency or part. It is sufficient to reply, that if a regeneration of the sinner, in which he has no activity, occurs previously to his exercise of faith, it does so precede faith, because from its nature man can have no part in it. We do not here undertake to decide the question whether God may supernaturally change the human will without doing violence to it; but there are few who will not admit that God, in compelling a moral agent to accept a pardon without his consent, would be doing violence to his moral

agency. Man, by a conscious act of his intellect, will, and affections, brought himself into a state of condemnation; and it is not strange that, in a similar way, he is brought into a state of justification.

The wisdom of God is displayed in making that faith which, as we have seen, is so indispensable to its sanctification, the means also of the justification of the soul. It certainly required more than human wisdom to suggest a *single* instrumentality which would prove effective at once in restoring man to the Divine favor and in reinstating him in his lost holiness.

What is called philosophy and faith are both agencies in the discovery of truth: the first through the natural reason, the latter through the testimony of God. It astonishes us that philosophy has always received, while faith has had denied to it, the meed of admiration which is its due. Both of them may be approved; but of the two, faith is the nobler and purer; in its character it is more beautiful and sublime, and in its attainments richer and more lofty. Faith is always humble and teachable; philosophy is often proud, self-willed, and intractable. Faith is a filial trusting in God; philosophy places its confidence in an erring judgment and a fallen heart. The eye of faith is bright, and beholds things invisible to mortal vision. Philosophy is short-sighted, and its orbit of action is contracted; it ranges the earth; it travels the material heavens; it discovers some spiritual truths; but it cannot, like faith, scale the heaven of heavens,—the home of God; it cannot unbar and open the everlasting gates and look in on the higher destinies of the human spirit. It is an earth-born thing, but faith is of heavenly origin,—directly “the gift of God.” If philosophy be trusted in alone, in relation to the affairs which concern the soul, it proves itself weak and ignorant, and seduces to delusion and death; while faith, kindly condescending to the wants and weakness of the Christian, becomes his counselor and guide, and, pointing

its finger sublimely to the skies, and treading triumphantly thitherward, conducts his rejoicing spirit to immortal truth, happiness, and life.

Granting that it is possible that the first preachers of Christianity obtained, without supernal aid, that deep and unprecedented insight into the true philosophy of faith which they manifested in all their preaching and in all their writings, it is by no means probable that they did so. We must therefore, to say the least, conclude that their intelligence on the subject, and the use they made of faith in building up the Christian church, affords a very strong probability of the fact of their inspiration.

CHAPTER XIV.

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

THE correspondence between the teachings of the gospel and those of reason on the subject of the responsibility of men for their belief is perfect, and serves to strengthen the general argument for the truth of Christianity.

It may be that all the ancient philosophers were in error on this subject. Sir James Mackintosh, in his "Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy," affirms that "the ancient philosophers, from Plato to Marcus Aurelius, taught that error of judgment, being involuntary, is not the proper subject of moral disapprobation." We do not, however, contend that what Christ and his apostles have taught on this subject is entirely original; it is probable that some of the philosophers of antiquity apprehended the truth under consideration; but we affirm that the gospel has rendered it more clear than it had ever appeared before,

and, in throwing light on so important a truth, gives another proof of its own Divine origin.

In showing, as we design to do in this chapter, that men are responsible for their religious belief, we shall at least answer an objection of those infidels who say that Christianity is unreasonable in holding men responsible for their opinions; we shall strike a blow at one of the most dangerous and one of the most popular forms of infidelity that exist at the present day. A disbelief of man's responsibility lies at the foundation of most of the prevailing infidelity. It is openly asserted by many of our philosophical writers; it is insinuated through much of the polite literature of the age. In the writings of Emerson we find much that implies a doubt of man's responsibility. Theodore Parker and F. W. Newman plainly teach that men's religious opinions are matters of indifference. The couplet is often quoted with approbation by popular writers :

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

In every community, in lands nominally Christian, some may be found who imagine themselves in no danger of the Divine displeasure, because they entertain what they are pleased to call honest doubts as to the truth of Divine revelation. In the visible church there are many who have embraced ruinous heresies, and yet have no apprehension of danger, because they suppose themselves conscientious as to their opinions. Multitudes are reckless in the formation of their religious opinions, from a latent, if not a conscious, persuasion that their opinions are, if not inevitable, at least so far beyond their control that the Almighty will not call them to account for them.

After what has been said in the previous chapter, it is scarcely necessary to prove that Christianity teaches the responsibility of men for their belief. It is clearly taught in the words of Christ, “He that believeth on Him is not

condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." "This is the work of God, (or the work which God requires,) that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The apostle John says, "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." The apostle Paul was at once a determined and a conscientious persecutor of the church of Christ. He says: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus;" yet he never justifies his persecuting spirit on the ground that his opinions as to the truth of Christianity were erroneous. He declares that he was the worst of men, because he persecuted the church of God. In almost every page of the New Testament the responsibility of men for their faith is clearly taught.

We proceed now to show that reason teaches us that men are responsible for their belief. Let us say that we mean not that all men, but that men generally, are so responsible. A man may be destitute of the natural faculties necessary to the formation of an opinion, and in that case no responsibility can attach to him: idiots, in consequence of their limited intelligence, are responsible for few or none either of their opinions or actions. A man may not have access to the evidence necessary to his forming an opinion on any given subject, and, in that case, his error is invincible, and he is therefore excusable. Heathens are not to be blamed for believing that God has never given a revelation to mankind; for the proof that He has given such a revelation is not accessible to them. When, however, men have the faculties which ordinarily belong to human nature, and accessibility to evidence on any subject, they are responsible for their opinion on it. All men are not equally responsible for their opinions; for, even in cases of perfect sanity, where the means of information are equally good, some men possess natural powers for the discovery of truth

superior to those of others ; and this, of course, graduates their accountability.

We shall first answer the arguments of those who oppose the doctrine for which we are contending.

It has been objected by one whose name stands high in the literary world that the doctrine of men's responsibility for their belief leads to religious persecution. It is a sufficient answer to this objection, that we are not responsible for the evil to which even truth, sometimes, seems to lead: Christianity itself, by its indirect influences or incidentally, sends a sword on the earth ; the perversion or misapplication of the most sacred and most indisputable truths often leads to the most hurtful consequences. It is not, however, the opinion that men are responsible *to God* for their belief (and it is that for which we are contending), but the opinion that they are responsible *to men* for their religious belief, that leads to persecution. Now we do not hold—we most stoutly deny—the responsibility of men to their fellow-men for their *religious* belief ; we hold that God alone is lord of the conscience, although we admit that there are some opinions for which men are justly responsible even before earthly tribunals. Let it be understood that men are not responsible to men for their religious opinions, and persecutions will cease, however widely it be believed that men are responsible to God for all their opinions. Whatever may be the evil of religious persecution, it were better that its fires should blaze in every land, and all its past horrors should be re-enacted, than that an opinion so destructive to religion and to morality as that of man's irresponsibility to God for his religious belief should prevail.

Another objection to the accountability of men for their belief is, that it is a matter in which they have no choice. It is said by the objector that our opinions are not influenced by our wills, that we necessarily believe according to the evidence presented to the understanding, that we can no more refuse to believe a fact or proposition proved to

us than we can refuse to perceive an object that is presented to our visual organs; and that, consequently, we are not responsible for our belief.

It has been replied to this objection that as we are responsible for our affections, even when they precede volitions, so we are responsible for our opinions even when they are not produced by acts of the will. We certainly have a responsibility with respect to the motives or affections which precede our volitions. Says Dr. A. Alexander: "When an investigation is made into the character of an act of which some one is accused, the main point, which by witnesses the court and jury wish to ascertain, is from what motives the accused acted. Accordingly as this is determined, so is he judged to be innocent or guilty. It hence appears that the true and ultimate source of actions is found not in the will but in the desires and affections. The simple act of volition, namely, a determination to do a certain act, is always the same, whatever be the motive. And to ascertain that an action proceeds from an act of will only determines that it is the act of a particular agent, but gives us no knowledge respecting the true moral quality of the act." Says another writer: "What is true of our beliefs is equally true of our affections. When any object is presented to the affections, can an act of the will change its apparent qualities so as to make that lovely which is intrinsically adapted to excite our aversion? The consciousness of every man tells him that he cannot help loving that which seems to him lovely, any more than he can help believing that which seems to him true, and that his will has no more power to change the qualities which excite his affections than it has to alter the evidence which controls his belief. If, then, his affections possess a moral character, which no one doubts, why may not his belief?"

It can be easily shown, also, that the opinions of men are, to a great degree, controlled by the will,—we here use the word will in its more restricted sense, as not including the

affections, although its decisions are at all times greatly influenced by the state of the affections. We do not believe that the will can refuse credence to a truth when the evidence of it is presented fully and fairly to the understanding; it may be that there are some errors of the understanding into which a mind at all enlightened cannot fall. The will has much greater influence in the formation of opinions on moral than on mathematical subjects. Usually, however, men believe very much as they please. A man may refuse to investigate a subject that is unpleasant to him, and thus remain in total ignorance with respect to it. To many minds the whole subject of religion remains a blank, because they imagine it unworthy of their regard, or because it has excited their aversion; a man may attend the house of God in which truth is clearly and powerfully stated, and remain for a lifetime ignorant of the first principles of religion, because he refuses his attention to the sacred themes discussed, and fails to reflect on them. Many remember well anything in the discourses of ministers that has a bearing on secular and ordinary interests, who can give no account of any religious doctrine that has been discussed; and this attention to one subject, and want of attention to another, has manifestly been the result of choice. When William Pitt could not understand, as he told Mr. Wilberforce, a single word of one of Mr. Cecil's sermons, to which they were both listening with apparent attention, his inability to understand must have resulted in part from his unwillingness to bring the powers of his mind to bear on the truth presented. Men may believe as they will in regard to almost any subject, because they may exclude from their minds all the arguments on that side of any question to which they are averse. Let a man, for example, be disposed to be an infidel; he may refuse to consult the pages of Butler, Paley, and Chalmers, and fill and fortify his mind with the arguments of Hobbes, Hume, and Gibbon, until all the reasoning before him is on the side

of his foregone conclusion. Even where the mind has had access to a full discussion of a subject, it may withdraw its attention to one side of the question until the other is lost sight of, and thus force itself into error. The human will has great power in recalling any thought or any train of argument that is agreeable to it; it has, too, the power of retaining and dwelling on a pleasing idea. It may also so direct the associations of the mind as to banish from it any thought that is unwelcome. To the same degree to which a man may control his thoughts, he may control, and consequently is responsible for, those opinions which result from his habits of reflection.

If we include the affections and emotions in the will, we see most clearly that the opinions of men are, to a great degree, voluntary: our affections constantly control our thoughts; truth that is accompanied with emotion rivets itself on the memory, and thus exerts a powerful influence on our opinions. The parent can scarcely be persuaded to believe anything evil of the child he loves; in politics, men believe all that is said by the papers and speakers of the party to which they are attached; and in religion, men believe for the most part only those portions of history which are favorable to the sect with which they are united, and adopt its dogmas without investigation or discussion.

A man may indeed tell us that he has embraced opinions for which he had no previous relish, and at which he even shuddered; for these opinions he is, however, responsible if he has gone voluntarily in the way of influences which were adapted to produce them. When a man affirms that he wishes to believe the truth and cannot, we regard him as mistaken as to his own wishes; as the drunkard sometimes abhors his intemperance (which is voluntary and sinful), while he usually prefers and loves it, so the man of whom we speak usually finds his errors agreeable to him, although they may sometimes excite in him a transient feeling of disgust and alarm.

The conclusion from what has just been said is, that if men are responsible for their volitions, they are also responsible for those opinions which are controlled, at least indirectly, by their volitions: they are responsible for all the evil opinions which rightly constituted wills, rightly used, might have prevented. We have answered the objection that men are not responsible for their opinions because they are involuntary, by showing, first, that men may be responsible for their opinions as they are for their affections, even when they are not controlled by their volitions; and secondly, that the opinions of men are usually, in fact, to a great degree, controlled by the will.

Another objection to the doctrine of the responsibility of men for their belief is, that the human will itself is not free,—that man is not a moral agent. They who present this objection hold that men are so influenced by necessity, so controlled by external causes, that they are not responsible for their actions, emotions, opinions, or volitions. If we could only convince them of the moral freedom of man, they would at once admit his entire accountability.

There are several theories held with respect to the human will. According to one of these, it has a self-determining power, an absolute originating power, so that its action is not determined by any antecedent state of the mind. The advocates of this theory regard motives as the mere occasions and not the cause of volitions, and represent the will as itself the only cause of its own actions. This theory has met with great opposition from many able metaphysicians and divines: it has even been contended that it is inconsistent with man's moral agency,—that man cannot be considered as a free and intelligent agent, except under the operation of the law of cause and effect influencing his will. We confess that we do not perceive how the self-determining theory is so objectionable as some have regarded it, if it be confessed by its advocates (as all believers in revelation must confess) that the human will

has become enslaved by sin. This theory does not necessarily oppose the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty, since God may have some other method (inconceivable to us) of governing his creatures than by means of motives; we are not to presume that we are able to ascertain all the ways in which the Divine Being may exercise dominion over the human soul. It is also true that the will having a self-determining power according to its original constitution, if it is enslaved by sin, does not necessarily oppose the doctrine of efficacious grace. It is enough for us to know that those infidels who deny man's moral responsibility become convinced of it as soon as they are persuaded that man has an originating power, and is able at any time to resist the pressure of any motive; with them we reason, and to them we say, that it is better and more reasonable to adopt the theory of the will which we have just considered than to deny man's responsibility for his belief.

There is another theory, according to which the will is necessarily governed by motives, and, where there is competition, acts in conformity with the motive that is the strongest. Says Alexander: "The real question in dispute in regard to the will is, whether, all things external and internal being the same to any voluntary agent, the volitions will be the same,—that is, whether a man in the same state of mind and under the influence of the same desires and motives, in kind and degree, will not always will and act in the same way. This we affirm; and the advocates of the self-determining power of the will deny." The theory just stated has been held by the ablest metaphysicians and divines both in Great Britain and America,—for example, by Edwards, Hodge, and Chalmers. If it be not true, it is impossible for us to form any opinion of a man's future conduct from his past course of action; and, indeed, it is difficult to see how anything of what we call moral character can be said to have an existence. If it be not

true, men must be also unable to state the reasons for their forming any particular volitions. It has been said by its opponents that, if it be true, the human will is under the influence of a necessity which is incompatible with moral liberty. To which objection it has been replied, that a moral or philosophical necessity belongs to God, to angels, and to the saints in heaven, and, therefore, cannot be regarded as incompatible with freedom; that this necessity is nothing more than certainty, and that if certainty is incompatible with liberty no creature in the universe is free. It is denied that the fact of volitions having a cause destroys man's moral agency. Says the author of "*The Method of the Divine Government*": "If it be alleged that the circumstance that volitions have a cause renders the agent no longer responsible for them, we forthwith demand the proof. If it be replied that the conscience says so, then we meet the assertion with a direct contradiction. The conscience clearly announces the responsibility of intelligent and voluntary agents, but it attaches no such condition to responsibility. No doubt, it says that if actions do not proceed from the will, but from something else, from mere physical or external restraint, then the agent is not responsible for them. But if the deeds proceed from the will, then it at once attaches a responsibility to them. Place before the mind a murder committed by a party, through pure physical compulsion brought to bear on the arm that inflicts the blow, and the conscience says, here no guilt is attachable. But let this same murder be done through the consent of the will, the conscience stops not to inquire whether this consent has been caused or no. On the contrary, it immediately declares the action to be highly criminal. Should it be proved that this act of the will has proceeded from an utterly malignant state of the will going before, so far from withdrawing its former sentence, the conscience pronounces a further condemnation upon the prior condition of the will now brought under its

notice." We must admit that the power of motives is reconcilable with the freedom of the will,—both of them being proved,—even if we cannot perceive the mode in which they may be reconciled.

If it be granted that the human will is bound by a necessity, of whatever nature, it still is true that God holds men responsible for their opinions, especially for those which relate to religion, both natural and revealed. Says Butler, in his chapter on "The Opinion of Necessity as Influencing Practice": "Now, I say, no objection from necessity can lie against this general proof of religion. None against the proposition reasoned upon, that we have such a moral faculty or discernment; because this is a mere matter of fact, a thing of experience, that human nature is thus constituted: none against the conclusion; because it is immediately and wholly from the fact; for the conclusion, that God will finally punish the wicked and reward the righteous, is not here drawn from its appearing fit that *He should*; but from its appearing that He has told us that *He will*. And this He has certainly told us, in the promise and threatening, which it has been observed the notion of a command implies, and the sense of good and ill desert which He has given us more distinctly expresses. And this reasoning from fact is confirmed, and in some degree even verified, by other facts: by the natural tendency of virtue and vice; and by this, that God, in the natural course of his providence, punishes vicious actions as mischievous to society, and also vicious actions as such in the strictest sense. So that the general proof of religion is unanswerably real, even upon the wild supposition which we are arguing upon." The passage just quoted applies to the subject under consideration; for the Divine command, implying promises and threatenings, certainly extends to our opinions as well as our actions, and, in the natural course of Divine providence, vicious opinions as well as vicious actions are punished.

Let us now direct our attention to some of the arguments which prove the responsibility of men for their belief.

Human society holds men responsible for their opinions and belief. The judge or the juror who does not form his opinion in accordance with the evidence brought before him is regarded as doing wrong to society at large, and as deeply criminal. We condemn the man who denies the existence of virtue and the obligation to listen to the dictates of conscience, or who regards vicious actions as either virtuous or indifferent. We are accustomed to judge a man's whole moral character by the opinions which he forms on moral questions. It is true that men often come to false conclusions with respect to important subjects; but when we find all mankind holding each other responsible for all their opinions in the ordinary affairs of life, we are bound to believe that men are so responsible.

God, in his providence, makes men answerable for their opinions. If a man believes that arsenic is not poisonous, and, under the influence of that opinion, takes the fatal substance, the penalty is death. If a man believes that he may breathe a malarious atmosphere with impunity, the consequence of his opinion is disease. If a man believes that an excessive use of ardent spirits will do him no harm, and acts accordingly, he suffers all the sad evils of intemperance. Truth is immutable, whether we recognize it or not; the belief of it is necessary to the practice of virtue and the promotion of human happiness. Error of opinion on moral subjects invariably conducts to vice and wretchedness; this is a law of our nature which we cannot alter. If men are held responsible for their opinions as to the principles of morality, we must believe them responsible also for their opinions with respect to Divine revelation.

That men are responsible for their opinions is evident from the fact that the judgment is greatly controlled by the state of the affections. All men acknowledge the intimacy

of the connection between man's intellectual and his moral nature ; and although it happens, in the present dilapidated condition of human nature, that the faculties of the mind and the feelings of the heart are often sadly disproportioned to one another, it is certain that by improving the one we improve the other ; we cannot doubt that if the moral character of man were restored to perfect vigor, his intellectual would at the same time reach its highest healthfulness. While we are convinced that the affections greatly control the judgment, we must also admit that men are responsible for their affections. If we do not admit this, we strip man of all responsibility. Is not man responsible for the indulgence of an appetite that degrades him to a level with the beasts of the field ? Is he not responsible for hating his neighbor, his brother, his father, his child ? Is not a man responsible for cherishing enmity to all holiness, and to the Author of holiness himself ? Our argument, then, is this : as man is responsible for the bad actions that result from bad affections, so he is responsible for the bad opinions which result from the same cause ; opinions, indeed, are in a sense only actions,—they are actions of the mind. If men are responsible for their affections, they are also accountable for all that inevitably flows from them.

Men are responsible for their opinions because they are responsible for their actions, since their actions inevitably result from their opinions. If you tell us the general character of any man's opinions, we can tell you the general current of his moral life. It sometimes, indeed, happens that a man's practice seems to be in conflict with his opinions or principles ; it is to be borne in mind, however, that exceptions exist to all general rules ; it is also to be considered that it is not always easy to detect a man's opinions and principles. It must be admitted at least that generally a man's belief determines his moral conduct. Let any human being suppose that there is no future retribution,

and he will do anything which does not expose him to present inconvenience, punishment, or disgrace. There is, on the contrary, no more effectual mode of elevating the moral conduct of mankind than by instilling into them a right belief; and even the Almighty renews the moral natures of men by changing their opinions. If a false opinion justifies a bad action, there is no species of crime under heaven that may not be approved; for there is no species of crime which the judgments of some men have not pronounced innocent: men have lied, stolen, and murdered while thinking that they were doing only what was right. Can you approve all the barbarities of the Inquisition? Yet the men who inflicted them were conscientious in thinking that heretics ought to suffer in body for the sins of the soul. If the doctrine we are opposing be admitted, to escape moral responsibility for any crime, a man has only to becloud his reason and pervert his conscience. According to this theory, if you wish to steal or murder, you have only to persuade yourself that the crimes alluded to are not wrong, and you may commit them without criminality. But who can suppose that men are not responsible for their actions, however their reason and conscience may be perverted? The doctrine we oppose leads to the absurd conclusion that in proportion as men's moral vision is impaired,—that is, in proportion as they become worse,—they have less evil to account for to God, and are, in every respect, to a less degree, moral agents. In proportion as the idea of responsibility to God is recognized, individuals improve and society makes advancement; destroy it, and society will sink into vice, virtue will become extinguished, and utter barbarism will ensue.

The most conclusive argument for man's responsibility,—alike for his opinions, his affections, and his actions,—is derived from the general *consciousness of mankind*. Every man is conscious that he is a moral agent. Logical demonstration is not necessary to establish this fact, and

notice." We must admit that the power of motives is reconcilable with the freedom of the will,—both of them being proved,—even if we cannot perceive the mode in which they may be reconciled.

If it be granted that the human will is bound by a necessity, of whatever nature, it still is true that God holds men responsible for their opinions, especially for those which relate to religion, both natural and revealed. Says Butler, in his chapter on "The Opinion of Necessity as Influencing Practice": "Now, I say, no objection from necessity can lie against this general proof of religion. None against the proposition reasoned upon, that we have such a moral faculty or discernment; because this is a mere matter of fact, a thing of experience, that human nature is thus constituted: none against the conclusion; because it is immediately and wholly from the fact; for the conclusion, that God will finally punish the wicked and reward the righteous, is not here drawn from its appearing fit that *He should*; but from its appearing that He has told us that *He will*. And this He has certainly told us, in the promise and threatening, which it has been observed the notion of a command implies, and the sense of good and ill desert which He has given us more distinctly expresses. And this reasoning from fact is confirmed, and in some degree even verified, by other facts: by the natural tendency of virtue and vice; and by this, that God, in the natural course of his providence, punishes vicious actions as mischievous to society, and also vicious actions as such in the strictest sense. So that the general proof of religion is unanswerably real, even upon the wild supposition which we are arguing upon." The passage just quoted applies to the subject under consideration; for the Divine command, implying promises and threatenings, certainly extends to our opinions as well as our actions, and, in the natural course of Divine providence, vicious opinions as well as vicious actions are punished.

Let us now direct our attention to some of the arguments which prove the responsibility of men for their belief.

Human society holds men responsible for their opinions and belief. The judge or the juror who does not form his opinion in accordance with the evidence brought before him is regarded as doing wrong to society at large, and as deeply criminal. We condemn the man who denies the existence of virtue and the obligation to listen to the dictates of conscience, or who regards vicious actions as either virtuous or indifferent. We are accustomed to judge a man's whole moral character by the opinions which he forms on moral questions. It is true that men often come to false conclusions with respect to important subjects ; but when we find all mankind holding each other responsible for all their opinions in the ordinary affairs of life, we are bound to believe that men are so responsible.

God, in his providence, makes men answerable for their opinions. If a man believes that arsenic is not poisonous, and, under the influence of that opinion, takes the fatal substance, the penalty is death. If a man believes that he may breathe a malarious atmosphere with impunity, the consequence of his opinion is disease. If a man believes that an excessive use of ardent spirits will do him no harm, and acts accordingly, he suffers all the sad evils of intemperance. Truth is immutable, whether we recognize it or not ; the belief of it is necessary to the practice of virtue and the promotion of human happiness. Error of opinion on moral subjects invariably conducts to vice and wretchedness ; this is a law of our nature which we cannot alter. If men are held responsible for their opinions as to the principles of morality, we must believe them responsible also for their opinions with respect to Divine revelation.

That men are responsible for their opinions is evident from the fact that the judgment is greatly controlled by the state of the affections. All men acknowledge the intimacy

of the connection between man's intellectual and his moral nature ; and although it happens, in the present dilapidated condition of human nature, that the faculties of the mind and the feelings of the heart are often sadly disproportioned to one another, it is certain that by improving the one we improve the other ; we cannot doubt that if the moral character of man were restored to perfect vigor, his intellectual would at the same time reach its highest healthfulness. While we are convinced that the affections greatly control the judgment, we must also admit that men are responsible for their affections. If we do not admit this, we strip man of all responsibility. Is not man responsible for the indulgence of an appetite that degrades him to a level with the beasts of the field ? Is he not responsible for hating his neighbor, his brother, his father, his child ? Is not a man responsible for cherishing enmity to all holiness, and to the Author of holiness himself ? Our argument, then, is this : as man is responsible for the bad actions that result from bad affections, so he is responsible for the bad opinions which result from the same cause ; opinions, indeed, are in a sense only actions,—they are actions of the mind. If men are responsible for their affections, they are also accountable for all that inevitably flows from them.

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The most conclusive argument for man's responsibility, —alike for his opinions, his affections, and his actions,—is derived from the general *consciousness of mankind*. Every man is conscious that he is a moral agent. Logical demonstration is not necessary to establish this fact, and

cannot overthrow it, in the face of those *intuitive convictions* which are stronger than all our reasonings.

Christianity, conforming to sound reasoning and to the intuitions of men, when she asserts man's responsibility for his belief, has given us another ground for confidence in all her declarations, and has thus also, by showing her superiority to the philosophy of antiquity, furnished another argument for her own Divinity.

CHAPTER XV.

REDEMPTION ATTESTS ITS DIVINITY BY THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF ITS INFLUENCE ON THE MORAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND POLITICAL INTERESTS OF MANKIND.—(*Historic Note, in which Christianity is traced back to Christ.*)

THE *practical influence of redemption in the world attests its Divinity*. In the five preceding chapters we have been considering this influence; it deserves still further notice. The argument of the present chapter will also be found to be different from that of those which precede it. In preceding chapters we have shown that the gospel proves its Divine origin by accomplishing results through means which, on no human calculation, could have effected them. In this chapter we shall direct attention mainly to the effects of the gospel, by themselves considered, and derive from them an argument for its Divine authority. The argument we propose is not new in any of its aspects; it is found in almost every treatise on the evidences of Christianity; it suggests itself to almost every mind in a Christian land; the review of it, however, may serve to confirm the previous decisions of our understandings, as well as to kindle our hearts, by showing how merciful are the designs of the blessed Author of our religion.

The influence of the gospel has been vast, and vastly beneficial, on the moral, intellectual, and political interests of mankind. Let us consider, first, its moral influence. We beg the reader to carry along with him what has been said on this subject in previous chapters.

The gospel produced the most beneficent *moral* effects at the period of its first proclamation. It is fair to infer that such effects would be produced by a religion which presents the most clear, correct, and sublime ideas of God; that states the true grounds of moral obligation and the real nature of virtue; that unfolds a perfect system of morals, and illustrates it in the life of a perfect man; but we design to prove the nature of the gospel by its effects, and not its probable effects by its nature. Appearing at a period of the deep and unprecedented degeneracy of the race, and amid the decline of valuable human institutions, Christianity preserved mankind from a moral corruption into which they were fast sinking, which would have been fatal to everything called civilization, if not inconsistent with the very existence of society, and for which there could have been no other remedy. It produced at once among the pagan nations transformations of moral character and habits which have ever since astonished the world. Infidels themselves do not deny the moral excellence of the first Christians. Gibbon speaks of "the innocent as well as the austere lives of the greater number of those who, during the first ages, embraced the faith of the gospel." The early advocates of our religion, without the fear of contradiction, affirmed the excellence of its moral influence. Said Origen: "Inquire into the lives of some among us,—compare our former and present mode of life,—and you will find in what impieties and impurities men were involved before they embraced our doctrines; but since they embraced them, how just, grave, moderate, and constant are they become! Yea, some are so inflamed with the love of purity and goodness as to abstain even

from lawful enjoyments; the church abounds with such men wherever the doctrines of Christianity prevail. How is it possible that they can be pestilent members of society who have converted many from the sink of vice to the practice of virtue and a life of temperance conformable to right reason." Lactantius, another of the fathers of the church, said: "Give me a man passionate, slanderous, ungovernable; with a very few words of God I will render him placid as a lamb. Give me a man greedy, avaricious, penurious; I will give him back to you liberal and lavishing his gold with a munificent hand. Give me a man who shrinks from pain and death, and he shall presently condemn the stake, the gibbet, the wild beast. Give me one that is libidinous, an adulterer, a debauchee, and you shall see him sober, chaste, temperate. Give me one cruel and bloodthirsty, and that fury of his shall be converted into clemency itself. Give me one addicted to injustice, to folly, to crime, and he shall, without delay, become just, and prudent, and harmless." Even pagan writers have borne testimony to the excellence of the morals of the early Christians. Pliny, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, written about seventy years after the death of Christ, confesses himself persuaded, after the most rigid investigation, that the Christians "were accustomed on a stated day to meet before daylight, and to repeat among themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by an oath with an obligation *of not committing any wickedness*, but, on the contrary, of abstaining from thefts, robberies, and adulteries; also of not violating their promise or denying a pledge." The evidence is also conclusive that the healthful moral influence of the gospel, at the time of Pliny and afterwards, was not only intense in degree, but wide in extent throughout the Roman empire.

Christianity from the first exerted a powerful reforming influence, not only on those who called themselves Christians, but on all to whom it became known. In a short

time it changed for the better the whole aspect of society. It banished from public view, if it did not entirely remove, detestable vices, at which even philosophers, on account of their familiarity with them, had failed to be shocked; it put an end to those gladiatorial exhibitions, in which the most cultivated men and women of classic antiquity took delight, and in which human blood was shed and human life destroyed, to make a holiday; it cultivated a love for truth, and inspired a benevolence unknown before in the most polished countries of the world.

During the last three centuries, our religion has secured as high moral effects as followed its first proclamation. It has been constantly reforming the lives of the most vicious of mankind. It has infused into the breast of general society a degree of moral principle absolutely miraculous. Few are so unfortunate as not to have witnessed instances of its transforming moral power. The noblest examples of virtue which the world has seen have been found, not only in Christian countries, but in the church of Christ. No nation is thoroughly Christianized, and civilization always has its peculiar vices; but the general morals of the evangelized are far more pure than those of other nations; and, in Christian lands, the largest amount of the purest morality is always found in the church. Bear in mind, also, that wherever the gospel is now received, it produces moral results similar to those which marked its early progress; the results of missionary labors during the present century evince its power to elevate the moral character and habits of mankind.

It must be confessed that in some parts of the world the Christian religion has been greatly mutilated and corrupted; our argument is strengthened by the fact that wherever it is preached in its primitive purity its moral effects are the most marked and beneficent. Who can doubt that if a pure gospel were proclaimed in all nominally Christian lands its healthful moral influence would be far more con-

spicuous? If Christianity should retire from the world, what gloom and desolation would ensue! All our knowledge, all our improvements in the sciences and arts, and all our past history, would not save us from ferocity; our very festivities would probably become as brutal as those of the halls of Odin. If not only its present influence but its effects during all the centuries of its past existence were withdrawn, the moral condition of the most fortunate of the nations would become more deplorable and sad than is that of the most unhappy and degraded of the heathen.

The moral includes the spiritual. Of the strictly spiritual effects of the gospel we have spoken elsewhere; though, from their nature, not as palpable as other effects, they may be satisfactorily ascertained. Christianity has produced the most real, fervid, and exalted piety ever known in the world; it has diffused the love of God instantly through human breasts that had been entirely destitute of it; it has kindled in some human hearts a devotion to the great Author of existence like that with which seraphim glow at the shrine of heaven. In Christian lands we do not expect to find even the appearance of piety, unless the gospel has produced it; it is much to be doubted whether a single spark of holiness, or anything which can be called genuine piety, exists, or has ever existed, among the heathen.

Nothing has been more decided than the influence of the gospel on the *domestic* interests of mankind; this may be also considered a moral influence. A striking contrast exists between a Christian and a pagan family. The gospel, sincerely embraced, converts a household which had been a theatre of contention and cruelty into a scene of kindness, contentment, and love. Nothing on earth is so beautiful and delightful as a Christian home; and of the votaries of all other religions but ours it is generally true, as the apostle said of the heathen of his day, that they are "without natural affection." Christianity has imparted the

highest delicacy to the parental, conjugal, and filial affections; it has exalted the institution of marriage, which is the source and guardian of all the domestic virtues. Wives in Christian lands are not doomed to extreme drudgery and servitude; a Christian wife and mother is something more excellent than society ever possessed where our religion is unknown. The fact of woman's elevation in Christian lands will not be disputed. To what cause is it to be traced? We admit that feudal institutions did have a certain degree of influence in producing this result. Upon this subject Guizot says: "The feudal lord belonged to a foreign and conquering, his serfs to a domestic and vanquished, race. Their employments were as various as their feelings and traditions. The lord lived in the castle with his wife, his children, and his relations; the serfs on the estate—of a different race, and of different names—toiled in the cottages around. The difference was prodigious: it exercised a most powerful effect on the domestic habits of modern Europe. It engendered the attachments of home; it brought women into their proper sphere in domestic life. Thus it was that women acquired their paramount influence,—thence the manners of chivalry and the gallantry of modern times: they were but an extension of the courtesy and habits of the castle." "The generous loyalty to sex," of which Burke speaks as existing in the days of chivalry, has survived the feudal institutions, and exists in modern society. But we would greatly err if we supposed that woman is indebted for her present position, either wholly or chiefly, to feudal institutions. After all that may be said of the respect which she received in the days of chivalry, she was then comparatively, both intellectually and morally, a degraded thing. We ascribe the great respect that is paid to woman, in Christian lands, almost entirely to Christianity itself. Even in the days of chivalry, the Christian religion had taught to man the value of woman. The Jewish religion, the forerunner and type

of the Christian, being itself superior to all other religions, and promising a Messiah, secured to the daughters of Israel a degree of respect such as no other females of ancient times received. Christianity is an improvement on Judaism in its power to elevate woman, as in all other respects. It teaches that woman was the mother of the Deliverer of our race, and that women were his truest friends and most faithful disciples. Polygamy has been one of the chief causes of woman's degradation, being destructive, to a great extent, of parental, conjugal, and filial affection, and almost subversive of the institution of the family; and the instructions of the Author of our religion on that subject have contributed much to place woman in, and secure to her, the position which is her due. By defining the true grounds of divorce, Christ has done much towards securing to woman her rights and respectability. Christianity has elevated woman, by enabling men to form more enlightened and correct opinions on every subject, and by inspiring them with a superior generosity and benevolence and sense of justice. By disclosing the fact of her immortality, our religion serves to place woman in her proper position, and secure to her a profound esteem; for man cannot fail to regard with respect a being equally with himself destined to an immortal life. Christianity has made woman absolutely better, has developed the loveliest and most valuable traits of her character; so that in Christian lands she is more highly esteemed because she is more really excellent; prompted by the motives that our religion presents, she rises to a moral elevation that commands the highest admiration. That very natural aptitude for religion, which in heathen lands debases women, because it makes them doubly the slaves of degrading superstition, in Christian lands renders them more deeply and more generally pious. We have dwelt so long on the influence of the gospel on female character, because woman presides over the empire of home, and whatever improves

and elevates her must promote, in the highest degree, the domestic interests of men. History abundantly attests that infidelity, or any other religion than the Christian, would abridge the dignity of the institution of marriage, and thus bring a blight on all the domestic affections. The disposition to exaggerate "woman's rights," now so prevalent, is not the offspring of the Christian religion, but is found in alliance with infidelity.

The Christian religion has improved the manners of men, thus exerting what may be also called a moral influence. Forms of politeness are observed, indeed, among heathen nations, but its true spirit has scarcely had an existence, except in Christian lands. True courtesy, which is a virtue, is a product of the gospel; it flows from that benevolence which our religion enjoins, which was conspicuous in the character of its Author, and which has ever distinguished his followers.

Christianity has promoted vastly what we may call the *intellectual* interests of mankind. It has made a noble contribution to the literature of the world in the gift of a book of such acknowledged literary worth as the Holy Scriptures. On the subject of the literary merits of the Bible it were idle to enlarge. The lawgiver of the Jews, whom the Grecian critic Longinus (speaking of the unequalled sublimity of the sentence, "Let there be light, and there was light") calls "no ordinary man," has given us in the first book of the Scriptures the finest specimens of rhetoric, as well as the germs of all future legislation, and the elements of all civilization. We claim for the Bible, as a literary work, absolute pre-eminence. Job, David, Isaiah, and Ezekiel must ever rank among the greatest poets of the world. As figures of speech, the parables of Christ stand unparalleled. The Bible has afforded the germs of the noblest uninspired literary productions; it has given the key-note to our most sublime modern poets. It will not be deemed disparaging to the great Grecian poet who has

received the homage of so many generations, to say that there exist works of modern poetic genius which, inferior perhaps to the *Iliad* in execution, vastly excel in their subject and design that masterpiece of classic antiquity. Dante and Milton, although somewhat indebted to the first heroic bard, drew their subjects from the Scriptures; and without their influence no such works of literature as the "*Divine Comedy*" and "*Paradise Lost*" could ever have been produced. Milton confesses himself inspired by the muse that he invoked, from Oreb and from Sinai and from Zion's hill, and from Siloa's brook "that flowed fast by the oracle of God." On all the great British poets, indeed, the Bible has left its impress.

Christianity certainly discloses truths of the very greatest breadth and magnitude,—eminently adapted to expand the human intellect. The grandest, noblest, and most improving thought ever suggested to the mind of man is that of the Supreme Being as revelation makes Him known; all the truths connected with the subject of redeeming grace, which are so fitted to break up the fountains of man's moral emotion, are also adapted to excite most intensely his intellectual powers. What subjects of profound thought are suggested by the assertion of the necessity of an atonement as a condition of forgiveness, the possibility and mode of it, and its consistency with the Divine perfections, the moral nature of man, and the rights and interests of the universal empire! Not all the phenomena of the world, or all the magnificence of the starry firmament, have ever awakened so lofty conceptions and glowing emotions as have been inspired by the cross. Christianity has also excited to the contemplation of abstract truths multitudes of minds that never would have risen to the comprehension of a principle, unless forced to it by a regard to their supposed eternal interests, and allured to it by such facts as the gospel presents. The higher works of science are altogether inaccessible to unlettered

minds; Christianity levels the loftiest thoughts to the apprehension of the most unscientific; the Holy Spirit simplifies the most abstract truths, and renders them the means of the mental improvement of the most illiterate.

The Christian religion has removed certain barriers to the pursuit of general science. By disclosing the doctrine of the Divine unity, it has exerted a vast influence in producing those improvements in physical science which have distinguished modern ages; thus, it has led men to expect an uniformity in nature, and encouraged their researches: there is a closer connection between the doctrine of the Divine unity and the inductive system of philosophy than men have thought of. It is also worthy of notice that our religion unfolds those truths in regard to God and immortality which the unevangelized learned have been most anxious to ascertain, and to the discovery of which all their energies have been bent, but the search after which was, without the light of revelation, utterly hopeless; and that thus the theological questions, which have absorbed great minds, are put to rest, and the highest intellect is left free to concentrate its energies on the investigation of general science. It is also to be considered that there is an ambition in the pursuit of science, as in other pursuits, which "overleaps itself," but which the Christian religion has a tendency to counteract and control; and that men who have learned to bow to the mysteries of revelation will submit to the mysteries of nature, and devote to the discovery of ascertainable truth the mental strength which might be, otherwise, spent in a profitless attempt to pierce the inscrutable.

It will be admitted that even an unscientific admiration of the wonders and beauties of nature tends to refine the feelings, awaken poetic emotion, and, in many respects, favor the cause of literature. The devout man, as is exemplified in many humble and illiterate Christians, loves to "look through nature up to nature's God." It has been

contended with much justice, that an enthusiastic admiration of nature has existed only in modern times and under the influence of the Christian religion. Says Alison: "It is peculiarly worthy of observation that the beauty of nature, as felt in modern times, seems to have been almost unknown to the writers of antiquity. They described occasionally the scenes in which they dwelt; but if we except Virgil, who, in this instance, seems to have anticipated the gentle influence of the gospel, never with any deep feeling of its beauty. Then, as now, the city of Athens looked on the evening sun, and her temples flamed in his setting beams; but what Athenian writer has ever described the matchless glory of the scene? Then, as now, the silver cloud of the Ægean Sea rolled round her verdant isle and sported in the azure vault of heaven; but what Grecian poet has been inspired by the sight?"

The Christian religion has really promoted an improvement in the physical sciences and useful arts, which is at once a proof and the means of intellectual progress; although we admit that these sciences and arts may be pursued too exclusively for man's highest moral welfare. The learned among the ancients regarded everything practical as unworthy of a philosopher, because they had no sincere desire to promote the happiness of the people; consequently the physical sciences and useful arts made slow progress. The mind of Bacon, the father of the inductive system, who has effected more for science in general, and especially for the physical sciences, than any other man, was formed in part by the Christian religion; his philosophy never prevailed, and probably never could have originated, under any other religious system. Macaulay, in his essay on Lord Bacon, after stating that the chief peculiarity of his philosophy is "fruit," the multiplying of human enjoyments, and the mitigating of human sufferings, —in Bacon's language, "the relief of man's estate,"—proceeds to show that "it is chiefly to the great reformation

of religion that we owe the reformation of philosophy." In the course of his essay, the celebrated essayist proves the contempt of the ancient philosophers for everything of a practical nature; he shows Plato's want of complacency in medicine, and even the art of alphabetical writing, and declares that even Archimedes thought that "geometry was degraded by being employed to produce anything useful"; he intimates that through Bacon, and thus through Christianity, philosophy and the arts have been made to co-operate with and aid each other. The Christian religion, then, by inspiring the learned with benevolence, has turned their attention to the physical sciences and useful arts, the study of which has contributed greatly to "the relief of man's estate," and given vigor and elevation to the intellect of the mass of men in Christian countries.

Knowledge is more generally diffused in Christian than it is or ever has been in any other lands; and this we owe to the gospel, which induces the more learned and wealthy of its votaries to desire and seek the mental improvement of all classes of society. It is a Christian duty to promote the intellectual elevation of the inferior orders of men. Our religion makes the cultivation of his understanding a moral duty, in the case of every man; it induces the Christian to aim at the perfection of every part of his being, and to acquire all the facilities for doing good which literature, science, and a cultivated intellect afford him. The Scriptures declare "that the soul be without knowledge is not good," and represent the day of the church's moral perfection as an era in which "knowledge shall be increased."

In proof of the intellectual influence of redemption we appeal to history. Long before the Saviour's personal appearance in the world—almost at the earliest period of human history—this influence began to be exerted; for it is to be considered that Heaven's earliest revelation to man, at first indeed enveloped in mist, was that of redemption. The Jewish people, ever looking forward to a re-

deemer, derived intellectual vigor from their religious hope ; it is certain that the descendants of Abraham sent forth a mental stimulus to all the surrounding nations, and that the intellectual greatness of Grecians and Romans is, in no small degree, due to their influence. Not the Pelasgic, nor the Teutonic, but the Semitic races, have been principally instrumental in giving thought (they have given great religions) to the world ; and at the head of the last-named races stands the Jewish. About the time that Christianity arose literature was on the wane ; during the first four centuries of the Christian era, cultivated intellect was found almost exclusively in the Christian church. Then Origen acquired his vast knowledge, Chrysostom (the golden-mouthed) spoke as eloquently as Cicero, and Augustine wrote with an ability equal to that of Aristotle. Without the influence of the Christian fathers, during the period alluded to, the world would have sunk into mental chaos ; classic literature would probably have been lost beyond the hope of recovery. In the dark ages of Christendom, the religion of Christ, itself corrupted, failed to exert its legitimate influence on the human mind ; but even then intellectual giants existed in Christian lands, who originated the germs of noble systems ; even then Christianity kept alive those embers of learning from which the intellect of the world has been rekindled. Wherever our religion has gone, literature has accompanied its march. To rude Germany, quite unlettered in the time of Tacitus, it early gave a degree of literature. It gave to the barbarous Goths letters and a translated Bible. Remote Ireland, where the art of reading had been unknown, became at an early period, through the influence of the Christian religion, the seat both of piety and learning. Russia owes her literary light to Christianity. Every candid and intelligent man will acknowledge how vast has been the influence of Christ's religion on the intellectual condition of England, Scotland, and France. Mohammedanism has claimed to

be a patron of literature and science; and there was a period when the learning of the Arabians stood proudly conspicuous amidst surrounding darkness, and cultivated genius graced the halls of the Alhambra; but the fact stares us in the face, that Islamism banished learning from the Greek empire on its first subjugation. Madame de Staël has asserted, that "Mohammedanism created warriors, but did not in the least assist the intellectual improvement." For three hundred years the Christian religion, and literature, science, and general intelligence, have been everywhere associated. Cast your eye now over the nations, and you will find all of them that are unevangelized intellectually inferior and for the most part grossly ignorant, having no literature, or at best one that is puerile and despicable, while the day-star of learning is rising even on the far distant evangelized isles of the ocean. Wherever the pure gospel is made known, the mass of the people become intelligent; it is lifting the whole world from low mental degradation into the regions of loftiest thought; nothing is so adapted to teach men to think, to think deeply, and to think rightly.

The gospel has exerted the happiest influence on the *political* affairs of nations. It has diffused true liberty. Its prevalence is not, indeed, incompatible with the existence of despotic institutions, but its tendency is to destroy them gradually and without violence. Despotisms have dissolved and sunk away before it as the snow-wreath melts beneath the sunbeams. The civil institutions that Moses established were popular; and when the Jewish people, in their blindness, desired to change their form of government, they were placed under what may be justly called a constitutional monarchy. Let us here say, that true liberty may be found in a monarchy as well as in a republic. The spirit of the New Testament is altogether favorable to civil liberty. A pure Christianity promotes self-respect and free inquiry; destroying the claims of a lordly priesthood, it

asserts the rights of conscience, and men who are used to think for themselves on the great subject of religion will claim for themselves independence of thought on all questions of political interest. Our religion cultivates in men a feeling of individuality, and leads them to the conviction that governments were made for man and not man for governments,—a conviction eminently favorable to freedom. Of course it would be unfair to measure the influence of the gospel on human liberty by the political effects of the Roman Catholic system, with which have been mingled many of the worst elements of paganism. Our religion has had the happy effect of inducing governments to make provision for the relief of their unfortunate subjects, has softened the inequalities of rank, and mitigated the severity of caste. Although war still exists, to the disgrace of human nature, it will be conceded that it is conducted on more humane principles than in former ages;—a change for which the world is indebted to the gospel. Under the influence of our religion the pledges of one nation to another are more faithfully regarded than in times past; Christian nations do not give hostages to each other to insure the fulfillment of their treaties and engagements. Whatever may be said of Roman Catholic persecutions, the gospel has produced a greater degree of religious toleration than has ever before existed among men: it alone has asserted the rights of conscience. Even in enlightened Athens the chief of the citizens perished a martyr to his religious opinions. The policy of nations is corrupt enough now; yet they find it necessary to hunt a pretext for their injustice; and the law of nations, which once had no influence in the control of states, has been, through the influence of the Christian religion, openly acknowledged and, to a considerable extent, respected and obeyed.

Whatever benefits have been conferred on human society by legislation, or literature, or science, or the arts, or other religions, or by all of them combined, and whatever pro-

gress they may have made in the lapse of ages, the gospel, as an instrument of benefit to man, has outstripped them all, and promises to keep in advance of them forever.

A religion may certainly produce such beneficent effects as to show that it has not been originated by man. That a holy religion, like that of Christ, has exerted so powerful and permanent an influence, is itself a proof of its Divine origin, for it has had to contend at every step with the native depravity and the vices of mankind, and has propagated itself so widely by means wholly pacific. The suddenness with which Christianity came and exerted its vast power must not be overlooked; other inventions or discoveries have been gradually made; happy political institutions have taken ages in reaching their maturity; the gospel sprang into the world full-formed and full-armed.

The moral effects of the Christian religion of themselves prove its Divinity, for nothing but Divine power could have raised up human society from the deep degradation into which it had sunk; human philosophy was unable to banish idolatry or reform the morals of mankind. The intellectual and political effects of our religion do not, by themselves, establish its Divinity, but they certainly serve to strengthen the general argument.

That this religion, which has so much and in every way affected the temporal weal of men, should have originated among rude and illiterate men, is wholly unaccountable on any other hypothesis than that of their inspiration. A system, whether religious or not, may produce beneficial results, if truthful; but, unless the gospel be Divine, it is a falsehood, since it claims Divinity. Is it credible that a falsehood has produced such effects as the gospel? Is it reasonable to think that a religious imposture of a few illiterate men has conferred more blessings on the world than the legislation of all its senates, the schools of all its philosophers, and the schemes and efforts of all its philanthropists? Does any one reply that it is the truth that is

mingled with the gospel that produces the good temporal effects that flow from it? The difficulty cannot be so disposed of. The question still recurs, how did these men of Galilee come into the possession of truth which has been so effective, despite the mingling with it of error so great and so adapted to retard its influence? Truth never before, no matter how refined from or how mingled with error, had produced results so beneficent. How did these men come into possession of more effective truth than the most admired sages of antiquity? Either the gospel reveals new truth, or only such truth as had been previously known. If it reveals new truth, how came the first preachers of it into possession of that truth, unless they were inspired? If it reveals only previously known truth, how has it happened that this old truth is so effective in its present form, unless it has been divinely organized and arranged?

That the apostles of Christianity attempted and expected the results which they produced is a conclusive proof both of their sincerity and inspiration. Nothing was more improbable than that they could succeed in reforming the most vicious of mankind, and in inducing them to embrace and love a religion which enjoined the practice of the strictest holiness. What, however, was the fact? They did attempt to convert to a holy life the worst of men. On the authority of the historian Gibbon, we affirm that "the Christians allured into their party the worst of criminals." We know that they allured these depraved men with the hope of reforming them; for their aims were benevolent, and without sanctity of life among their disciples they could not have expected their religion to prevail. Impostors would never have attempted so difficult a work; and if the apostles were sincere, they were inspired, for they claim to be so, and could not have been mistaken about such a fact as that of their inspiration. Attempting to reform the worst of mankind, the apostles could not have succeeded in their effort

if the gospel had not contained and exerted a superhuman power; that they did so succeed has been already proved even by the confession of Gibbon himself, as to the innocence and austerity of the lives of the first Christians, and by other authority.

We are justified in saying that the apostles of Christ *knew*, not only that they would gain disciples among the most depraved classes of human society, but that they would succeed in reforming the vilest of mankind; otherwise they would not have attempted it. How did they know it? Certainly by no past experience and by no human foresight. They knew it only by inspiration; they could have known it in no other way. It need not be repeated, that if the apostles were inspired the religion which they proclaimed is Divine.

We have seen that the effects of the gospel prove its Divine origin in a twofold way: directly, by showing that it is accompanied by supernal power, and indirectly, by establishing the fact of the inspiration of the men who first proclaimed it. We might have said with propriety, in a previous part of this chapter, that if the apostles were not inspired as they pretended to be they were liars and very gross impostors, and that it is incredible that bad men could or would have invented and published anything so holy in itself, or so designed and adapted to produce good morals as Christianity; we must, therefore, believe that they were inspired.

Note to the preceding chapters.—It is not necessary to the completeness of the arguments of the preceding chapters to show at what time and by what men the gospel was first proclaimed. As Christianity *exists* in the world, it ought not to be required of us to account for its existence any further than by giving a plausible statement of the manner of its origination; and if any deny this statement, it devolves on them to show at what time and by whom our religion was invented. Here infidelity is entirely at fault. No man can present a theory of the origin of the Christian religion different from

that which we present, that deserves the slightest respect. It may, however, afford satisfaction to the reader to observe the proof that the gospel was first published at the time generally supposed by the church, and that its first preachers were the apostles of Christ and his immediate disciples. The evidence is strong that an account of the crucifixion of Christ was immediately after the event transmitted to the imperial authority at Rome. Justin Martyr, in his "Apology for the Christian Religion," written in the early part of the second century, says: "And that these things were so done, you may know from the acts written in the time of Pontius Pilate." Tertullian, in his "Apology," written at the close of the same century, says: "Of all these things, relating to Christ, Pilate, himself in conscience already a Christian, sent an account to Tiberius, then emperor;" and again: "Search your own records. At the moment of Christ's death, the light departed from the sun, and the land was darkened at noon; which wonder is related in your annals, and is preserved in your archives to this day." It is incredible that these fathers should have used this language if the record referred to had no existence, and it is impossible that it should have been an interpolation, since the Roman government was still pagan. The Roman historian, Tacitus, the only great historian of his country in that day, wrote his "Annals" during the first century, in which work, speaking of the persecution of Christians that had occurred under Nero, some years before, he says: "They derived their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, suffered death by the sentence of the procurator, Pontius Pilate." The letter of Pliny to Trajan, written about seventy years after the death of Christ, represents the number of Christians as very great. From the foregoing testimony, every rational mind ought to be convinced that Christ existed, that He was put to death during the reign of Tiberius, and that He founded a religious sect that survived Him and soon became very numerous.

There is no reason why the authority of the early Christian, on the subject under consideration, should not have as much weight with us as that of pagan, writers, especially since the former were induced by the facts they record to embrace a persecuted faith. Origen wrote at the commencement of the third century; Tertullian, Irenæus, and Clemens Alexandrinus wrote during the latter part of the second century. The authenticity and genuineness of their works which have descended to us are no more questioned than those of the works of Tacitus; and they all give that account of the time and manner of the origin of the Christian religion which is received among Christians. Irenæus, says Neander, "still remembered in his old age what he had heard in his youth from the lips of the

venerable Polycarp concerning the life and the doctrines of Christ and his apostles." He tells us that Polycarp was the friend and disciple of the apostle John, and in this statement we have an unbroken chain of evidence back to Christ himself. Justin Martyr wrote in the early part of the second century, not ninety years after the death of Christ. The authenticity of his work, still extant, is not doubted. He in his early manhood was, probably, contemporaneous with some of the apostles, and certainly with many who had known them. He states what we believe as to Christ and the first promulgation of his religion. The writings of Justin prove that the Christians were numerous in the early part of the second century, ninety years after the death of Christ. Surely, he lived near enough to the alleged time of the apostles to ascertain himself from living witnesses or the events of the last half of the first century, and whether the apostles had lived, preached, and been successful. We have earlier Christian writers than Justin Martyr. The writings of Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, and Polycarp (to speak of no others), contemporaries of the apostles, survive to us. Of Polycarp Neander says: "To him is ascribed an epistle to the church at Philippi; nor are there any sufficient reasons for doubting that he was the author of it." Irenæus speaks of this epistle as in everybody's hands. In it are found quotations from the evangelists and from the epistles of Paul and Peter, and sufficient evidence of Christ's existence, character, and sufferings. Clemens Romanus, who wrote the epistle to the Corinthians which is still extant, is supposed by Neander to be the same Clement whom Paul mentions in his epistle to the Philippians. This epistle, Neander says, was, in the first centuries, read in public worship. It confirms what we have said of the origin of Christianity. In it he says: "The apostles have preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ from God." The epistle of Barnabas is generally supposed to have been written by that Barnabas who was the companion of Paul; of this there is no satisfactory proof. Neander says that "there is no hint that intimates that the author of the epistle wished to have it supposed he was Barnabas;" yet Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen ascribe this epistle to Barnabas, Paul's fellow-laborer. They testify, therefore, to its existence before their time, and could not have mistaken it for the work of Barnabas had they not known that it had been in existence for many years. We conclude that, whoever was its author, it was written in the first century. It bears testimony to the existence of our religion at the time it was written, and to the manner of its first promulgation. It says that when Christ "chose his apostles, which were afterwards to publish his gospel, He took men that had been very great sinners,

that thereby He might plainly show that He came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." We have seen by the foregoing statements that we have an unbroken chain of history to the very times of the apostles; and from the writers just named we prove the existence of the four gospels and nearly all or all of the writings of the New Testament.

We go back to the evangelists, the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles of the apostles. These writings have been proved to be genuine by an argument, which must be accepted as conclusive, or the genuineness of no man's writings, especially of a past century, can be proved. The only question that remains to be considered is, Do these writers of the New Testament speak the truth? If they do not speak the truth, how has it happened that no contemporaneous writers have contradicted them? No positive witnesses can be brought forward to dispute the facts which they affirm. Their testimony was sufficient to convince thousands of their own generation, despite the most powerful prejudices. They write with a candor and simplicity that never accompany the utterance of falsehood. There are differences in the four gospels, which prove that they were not copied from each other; there is a harmony between them that shows that they describe from the life. The accidental coincidences between the statements of the various writers of the New Testament prove that they were describing real facts and uttering truth. The doctrines which they teach show, as we are proving in this volume, that they were inspired.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHRISTIANITY THE TRUE, BECAUSE THE BEST, RELIGION. ATHEISM.
PANTHEISM.

CHRISTIANITY *must be accepted as the true religion, because of all religions it is the best.* Whether considered as a theory, or with respect to the worth of its practical effects, or in reference to the nature of its proofs, it is the best of all religions. We shall first show that the best of religions must be the true one; and we shall then exhibit the

superiority of the Christian to every other system of religion.

Some one religion must be true. It is manifest from the history of human nature and evident from the constitution of man that men must have a religion. The proposition that "man is a religious being" has never been seriously disputed. Formed for worship, he necessarily adores something as superior to himself. That the religious principle is inherent in human nature is a matter of universal human consciousness: every man in watching the movements of his intellect and affections discovers this truth; conscience, in unfolding a Divine law, teaches the existence of a Divine lawgiver, and impresses on the understanding the conviction that He who legislates for the universe ought to be revered and adored. Napoleon once scouted the idea of the existence of a nation wholly destitute of the military spirit and the implements of war; it would be still more impossible to discover a nation wholly destitute of religion. The religious sentiment has existed universally in the world. Far back as history casts its light, all men, whether living in temperate, torrid, or frigid climes, whether warlike or pacific, of whatever grade of barbarism and civilization, have had their divinity and worship. If a nation should be discovered so deeply debased as to be destitute of a religion, we would expect it, as soon as it began to emerge from its extreme barbarism, to develop and exhibit religious propensities. The religious feeling, so universal, is also the most powerful in the human breast. It may be sometimes suppressed amid the business of the world and the din of battle; but it never fails to rise again amid tranquillity and solitude, as it did with Charles V. in the monastery and Napoleon at St. Helena. It has induced man to perform the severest toil and endure the most painful penances; it has given rise to almost half the wars that have existed; it has mingled with and shaped the politics of every nation on the globe, so that he cannot

be a wise statesman who ignores or overlooks its existence and influence. A feeling so universal and powerful cannot have its source in tradition alone ; nor can it be the mere result of education or of any act of the understanding alone ; it must be an instinct, which nature's God has implanted in the human breast ; as such it cannot deceive us, and consequently some religion must be true.

That religion is true also admits of logical demonstration. It is a necessity to man : without it, no nation could ever emerge from, and the most polished of modern nations would revert to, barbarism. When France, during its bloody revolutionary era, had disowned all religion, one of her politicians affirmed that if there were no God the welfare of the country made it necessary to make one. Without religion no oath can be administered, and consequently no courts of justice can exist ; nor can there be any fear of future punishment to restrain men from crime, any adequate regard for human life, any stability and purity in the conjugal relation, which is the nurse of all the virtues and the parent of the social organization itself. If religion is so congenial to man, and so deep a necessity to him, it is reasonable to suppose that some one of the various religions that exist on earth is true.

We affirm also, that only one of the religious systems which prevail among men can be true. All of them, indeed, may contain elements of truth, but only one of them can be worthy our acceptance. If theism be true, polytheism must be rejected. If God has given a revelation to man, all religions that disown that revelation must be defective. If Christianity be true, all other religions must be false in the main, except what is called the religion of nature, which, in that case, is insufficient, since the Scriptures pronounce it so. In rejecting the Christian religion, infidels leave to themselves no satisfactory religion. When Lord Chesterfield was asked by a lady in France why the English still adhered to the Christian religion, he

replied that he supposed it was because they could not find a better. No system of infidelity and no other professed revelation from Heaven can so satisfy the understandings or the moral feelings of men as the Christian religion. It is a sufficient reason for not rejecting the Christian religion that we cannot find a better; as a man cannot be satisfied without a religion, it is reasonable and right that he should select and adopt that which, all things considered, seems the best. If some religion is true, and only one is true, the best religion must be true, because we are bound to ascribe to a Divine origin (if, indeed, we ascribe any to it) that which is best rather than that which is worse. We must ascribe one to a Divine origin, because we must believe that the benevolent Being who has given us religious propensities, has not left us without a true religion corresponding with them. In inquiring after that true religion we have only, therefore, to examine the religions of the world and find out which of them is best sustained by external evidences, most truly reflects the attributes of God, and is best adapted to the necessities of man.

We now proceed to show that Christianity is the best of religions. We shall examine all the systems of religious faith which men, denying or ignorant of our religion, have embraced, and shall prove that every one of them presents greater difficulties to the understanding than the Christian religion. Most of them are wanting in the proofs of a Divine origin, which the gospel justly claims for itself; and no one of them offers to man, with any satisfactory sincerity, the benefits which his moral nature and necessities demand. We meditate now an aggressive, not a defensive, warfare. The unbeliever may indeed cavil at the Christian religion; he may urge against it objections which it is not easy to answer; but no man who denies the truth of the gospel can plainly state his system of faith, and maintain it in the face of argument.

Let us first direct our attention to *atheism*, or the denial

of the existence of a God. It is indeed not a system, and certainly it is not a religion; but as the atheist imagines that he holds religious opinions, it may be well briefly to show that his opinions are not so well sustained as those of the Christian. No argument can be adduced to prove conclusively that there is no God. If it were admitted that there exists no spiritual Being of infinite power pervading the universe, no man could prove the fact. The invisibility of such a Being, or the fact that He had not exerted his power in this portion of the universe, would not disprove his existence; He might, nevertheless, make a display of his attributes amid other scenes. A man may imagine that he can account for all the effects witnessed in the world, without supposing a Divine agency employed in producing them; but no man can affirm that the existence of a God is an unreasonable supposition on which to account for them, no man can say that the existence of a God is a thing impossible. Atheism is *unproved*. It is true of it also that it is *disproved*. Argument enough exists on this subject to have convinced almost all men of all countries and generations of the world. Whence this universal persuasion, if there be no God? Indeed, the very conception of a Divine Being, even if it had not been so universally cherished, affords no contemptible argument for his existence. Atheism is contradicted by the religious sentiment in the human breast,—the universal propensity to worship. Theism proves its truth by its beneficent effects; atheism is so depressing to man's hopes, so crushing to his best aspirations, so destructive of virtue, so prolific of vice, that it is not reasonable for one moment to entertain it; truth could never produce such disastrous results.

Our limits do not allow us to present an extended argument on the subject of the Divine existence; we can merely hint at what has been said by the ablest writers. Two kinds of substances only exist in the universe,—matter and mind. Atheists have endeavored to disprove the existence

of the latter; but every man is conscious that the properties of the thinking substance within him are different from those, and some of them opposed to those, of the material substance which it occupies. The difference alluded to proves the difference of the substances themselves. One or the other of these kinds of substance must be eternal. They are the only conceivable substances, and some substance must have existed from eternity or nothing could have existed: for from nothing nothing could have come, and the universe would have been an eternal vacancy. It is not necessary, however, to suppose that both mind and matter have existed from eternity; it is enough to suppose the eternal existence of one of them,—and we ought not to suppose more in this case than we necessarily must suppose. But which of them has so existed? Not matter alone, because it could never have organized itself and could never have given motion to itself, and because it could never have called mind into existence. It is necessary, then, to suppose that some mind has existed from eternity. It is also sufficient to believe that mind *alone* has had an eternal existence, since *mind* is the seat of power, and can be conceived of as able to organize material nature, and to create matter and mind alike. Some mind has been eternal, but not the human mind; Divine mind must be conceived of. This essence mind, which is necessarily the eternal existence, is also necessarily infinite, that it may be competent to its vast effects, in other words, is God.

The argument for the existence of a God which is drawn from the manifestations of design with which the universe abounds commends itself alike to scientific and illiterate minds. Such is the constitution of the human mind that every man necessarily believes that every effect must have a cause. This great psychological truth is as well known to the ignorant man as to the scholar, since it is a matter of universal consciousness. In the various contrivances and adjustments of nature we see effects that point us to

the great intelligent contriver,—the first cause,—God. Says Dr. Reid: "The argument from final causes, when reduced to a syllogism, has these two premises. First, that design or intelligence in the cause may with certainty be inferred from marks or signs of it in the effect. This is the principle we have been considering, and we may call it the major proposition of the argument. The second, which we call the minor proposition, is, that there are in fact the clearest marks of design and wisdom in the works of nature. And the conclusion is, that the works of nature are the effects of a wise and intelligent cause. One must either assent to the conclusion, or deny one or other of the premises." It seems nothing short of insanity itself to ascribe all the various arrangements of nature to accident, or to doubt that they are results of power guided by intelligence. Atheism has indeed affirmed that if contrivance indicates an intelligent contriver, the contriver himself must also be caused, and that we must look for another cause back of the Deity himself. But atheism forgets that the human mind must pause when it reaches the infinite,—that it can reason no further, that our primary beliefs lead us only to and not into the infinite; and that we are satisfied in our search for a cause when we discover one in that region of infinity where further inquiry and reasoning become impossible. Besides, in God, the contriver, we find no marks of design to lead us back of Him; we find in Him no effects of which He is not himself an adequate cause. Space is not allowed us in which fully to unfold the argument from design; it is enough to refer the reader for further instruction to Paley's "Natural Theology." Let not the fact be overlooked, however, that not only the physical sciences furnish, but that moral science also furnishes, illustrations of this great subject. From the law written on the human heart we derive an unanswerable argument for the existence of a God. That law is an effect that implies a cause, it indicates an infinite lawgiver. Here

let us say, that although the existence of God is logically proved by the argument from design, it is also intuitively known. The idea of God arises in the mind, as do the other primary beliefs, on the condition of something else being discovered. It is suggested by a law of the mind, and occasioned by a survey of the contrivances of nature and the mind's consciousness of a moral law. In view of the foregoing reasoning, hasty and crowded as it has been, we may confidently say that atheism, in attempting to account for the existence and order of the universe without supposing the existence of a first cause of infinite intelligence and power, has more difficulties to overcome than ever have lain in the way of the credibility of the Christian religion.

Pantheism is one of the heads of the hydra infidelity; in some of its aspects it is a religious system; let us inquire whether it is to be preferred to Christianity, with adherence to which the adoption of it is forever incompatible. Not only the transcendental metaphysician, but many of our modern natural philosophers, and many of our admired modern poets, have adopted this system of error; many unlettered persons embrace it unconsciously, and there is even danger of its becoming widely popular. Although an unusual attention has recently, in Europe and America, been directed to pantheism, its origin must not be regarded as recent or even modern. It has existed from an early period of the world, and mingled itself with the religions of many of the most polished nations; it was embraced in most of the early Oriental systems of religion, and was at an early day carried into Greece, and is found to underlie much of that classic poetry which has descended to the present generation. Between polytheism, both ancient and modern, and pantheism, there is a close alliance. We have already shown that the theories of most of the philosophers of ancient Greece were entirely pantheistic. Among the Soofees of Persia pantheism prevails. Brahmanism and

Booddhism are only forms of it. In modern Europe Cesalpino and Giordano Bruno, both Italians, were the first to uphold complete pantheistic systems. Spinoza, born in Amsterdam in 1632, may be regarded as the father, and certainly was one of the ablest advocates, of modern pantheism. Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, of Germany, in the last century, and Strauss, of Germany, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, of the United States of America, in the present century, have been distinguished by the invention or advocacy of pantheistic theories.

It is not impossible to define pantheism, although the various systems of it differ widely from one another. Its nature may be learned from its etymology, it being composed of two Greek words, viz., *pan*, signifying everything, and *theos*, signifying God. It teaches that everything is God,—that God is not distinguishable from the universe; in other words, that there is but one substance,—God; and that human souls and all material things are only parts or phenomena of the one Divine essence. A distinguished pantheist has thus presented his system: "God is the eternal movement of the universal principle constantly manifesting itself in individual existences, and which has an objective existence but in those individuals which pass away again into the infinite." Atheism denies the existence of a God; pantheism teaches it, and affirms that the Divine being is everywhere, in everything, and everything. Theism teaches that God is everywhere and in everything, but also (what Spinoza denies) that He has a substantial existence distinct from that of the universe as we contemplate it. Pantheism really denies the personality of God; but every man, it must be borne in mind, who believes that there exists but one substance, which he calls Divine, and that all mind and matter, as known to us, is only phenomenal, is a pantheist, even though he professes to recognize the personality of the Deity. Inasmuch as pantheism admits that there is a God, and that He is everywhere present, it has

truth; inasmuch as it affirms that there is no substance but God, and that all the creation is only phenomenal of the Divine essence, and inasmuch as it denies the Divine personality, it is an error deeply dangerous and utterly absurd.

It is only fair to state that the advocates of pantheism have brought reasoning to its support. Their arguments are plausible enough, if we fail to consider the fatal consequences in which they terminate. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* is a motto of the ancients, which contains much truth, and from which pantheists profess to derive an argument in behalf of their system. They say that it is impossible to conceive that God has created the universe out of nothing,—that the substance which He has organized into minds and worlds must have always existed, and consequently must be himself. It is true indeed that if nothing had existed nothing could have come into existence, and the universe would have been a blank; but, once admitting a God to exist, we cannot limit his creative power,—we are not at liberty to limit his work to the mere organizing of already existing materials. It cannot be proved that God is unable to create something out of nothing, and consequently pantheism cannot be proved. We cannot indeed conceive how God has effected the creation, but there are a thousand mysteries in the universe which we cannot pretend to fathom. Man cannot create something out of nothing; he can only rearrange what has already existed. With God, however, all things are possible. The pantheist in his argument begs the question; he takes for granted the very thing which he is required to prove,—viz., that God cannot create,—cannot call substance into existence from the abyss of nothing. We defy him to the proof. Another argument is adduced by pantheists, which has no little plausibility. If there be a God, He is infinite. Now, say the pantheists, nothing can be added to infinity, consequently there can be no creation,—no new substance can

be called into existence,—and all that we call the creation must be only phenomenal. If this mode of reasoning had reference only to finite things, it would seem conclusive. We cannot, however, make the infinite one of the terms of our reasoning. On every question involving the infinite we find ourselves involved in contradictions when we begin to reason. Sir William Hamilton has shown that it is impossible for us to understand how the infinite can be the absolute,—these two things seem to us even contradictory; yet we do believe, and must believe, that the infinite God is absolute,—complete. In the same way we must believe that the existence of the infinite spirit does not preclude the existence of other substances. We speak of God's infinitude, but what do we know of it? Does not the power to create—to call something out of nothing—constitute a portion of it?

We object to pantheism that it is virtual atheism. Says Morell: "A being to whom understanding, will, and even personality is denied,—a being who does not create but simply is, who does not enact but simply unfolds, who does not purpose but brings all things to pass by the necessary law of his own existence,—such a being cannot be a father, a friend, a benefactor,—in a word, cannot be a God to man, for man is but a part of himself. It may be more correct to call the philosophy of Spinoza a pantheism than an atheism; but if we take the common idea or definition of Deity as valid, then we must conclude that the God of Spinoza is no God, and that pantheism is only a more imposing form of atheism."

All the arguments which prove the personality of the Deity disprove also the theory of the pantheist. Man believes in his own personality, and regards it as an excellence, and, necessarily, therefore, ascribes personality to the God whom he regards as superior to himself. The consciences of men speak to them of their responsibility to a higher person; no man, in his more serious moods, doubts

the personality of God. The marks of contrivance with which the universe abounds prove it. Says Paley: "Contrivance, if established, seems to prove everything which we wish to prove. Among other things, it proves the personality of the Deity as distinguished from what is sometimes called nature, sometimes called a principle, which terms, in the mouths of those who use them philosophically, seem to be intended to admit or express an efficacy, but to exclude and deny a personal agent. Now, that which can contrive—which can design—must be a person. These capacities imply personality, for they imply consciousness and thought. They require that which can conceive an end or purposes, as well as the power of providing means and directing them to their end. They require a centre, in which perceptions unite and from which volitions flow, which is mind. The acts of a mind prove the existence of a mind, and in whatever a mind resides is a person." Besides what has just been said, let us recollect that, from the constitution of our natures, we necessarily ascribe the highest perfection to the first existence or God, and necessarily believe that thought, volition, and purpose, which constitute personality, are necessary to the highest perfection.

The pantheist does violence to man's nature by ascribing positive imperfection to the Deity. To predicate imperfection of a part of a being is to affirm it of that being as a whole; if, for example, you say that man's liver or lungs are diseased, you affirm that the man as a whole is diseased. If man is a part of the Deity and sick, then the Deity is sick. If man as a part of the Deity is morally depraved, then is the Deity morally depraved. If also the material world be a part of God, the Deity is not immutable, since the material world is ever changing. In reply to an expressed opinion of a pantheistic writer that creation is necessary, Sir William Hamilton presents the following argument, in which he shows that the whole

pantheistic theory is opposed to our natural conceptions of the Divine perfection. "The subjection of the Deity to necessity, the necessity of self-manifestation, identical with the creation of the universe, is contradictory to the fundamental postulates of a Divine nature. On this theory God is not distinct from the world; the creature is a modification of the Creator. Now, without objecting that the simple subordination of the Deity to necessity is in itself tantamount to his dethronement, let us see to what consequences this necessity inevitably leads. On this hypothesis, one of two alternatives must be admitted. God, as necessarily determined to pass from absolute essence to relative manifestation, is determined to pass either *from the better to the worse, or from the worse to the better*. The first supposition must be rejected. The necessity in this case determines God to pass from the better to the worse,—that is, operates to his partial annihilation. The power that compels this must be external and hostile, for nothing operates willingly to its own destruction; and, as superior to the pretended God, is itself the real deity if an intelligent and free cause, or the negation of all deity if a blind force or fate. The *second* is equally inadmissible, that God, passing into the universe, passes from a state of comparative imperfection into a state of comparative perfection. The Divine nature is identical with the most perfect nature." Thus we see that, according to pantheism, God either has once been or is now imperfect, while we naturally and necessarily believe the contrary of both of these things,—viz., that He never was imperfect, and that He is not imperfect now, but that He is immutably and eternally perfect.

Pantheism opposes the demand of man's moral nature for a fit object of religious worship. Man can scarcely adore the God of the pantheist,—a mere abstraction or a mere principle of activity, equally indifferent to, and unconscious of, the homage that is paid it. The worship of such a

being is not superior in its moral character and effects to idolatry ; as well may men pay religious homage to stocks and stones as to an infinite essence without attributes or any mere finite material or mental phenomena. If man and nature be portions of the Deity, the worship of them, so far from being sinful, is a duty ; yet conscience teaches us that such worship is sinful, and that we are capable of a nobler adoration.

All the theory of the pantheist, as it is opposed to, is also flatly contradicted by, that yearning after immortality which nature has placed in the bosoms of us all. Man startles at annihilation more than at the grave ; and his dream of an immortal life comes over him as sunlight to cheer the gloom of his dungeon. Pantheism speaks of no conscious immortality to man, but affirms that he is destined to lose identity, consciousness, and personality in death,—to be reabsorbed in the Divinity, as the billow on the breast of the ocean sinks and loses its individuality in the mass of waters. Nature never designed to cheat man by offering him the extinction of his consciousness for the warm and glowing immortality for which he sues ; and that system is false which promises no more for the soul than death effects for the body,—death which destroys the sensibilities of the body and decomposes it without annihilating the particles of which it is composed.

All moral distinctions are subverted by pantheism. There is no motive to the love or the fear of a mere abstraction ; and to remove from men the hope of future rewards and the fear of future punishments, as is done in the denial of individual immortality, is certainly to withdraw all the chief incentives to a virtuous life. It is difficult to perceive, on the supposition that there exists no personal God, how any moral law, and, of course, how sin, can have an existence. If all the actions of men are only phenomena of the Divine substance, they cannot be conceived of as attended with criminality. Indeed, pantheism

boldly affirms that "sin is a necessary part of a beneficent development." From the advocates of a system which makes the Deity the source and perpetrator of sin, it is vain to expect any conviction of guilt, any abhorrence of moral evil, any repentance.

In the theory which we oppose there is nothing to impart dignity and elevation to human character. The idea of a personal God of infinite attributes is necessary to give the greatest expansion and earnestness to the intellect of man. A system which disowns all moral distinctions can place before men no noble and worthy object of existence; and man can perform no great deeds without a motive drawn from the hope of immortality, but ceases to respect his nature when he regards it as only a flash to be extinguished in eternal darkness. Pantheists are universally either reckless theorists, or sublimated poets, or mere dilettanti, having little sympathy with, and receiving little confidence from, other men.

To the heart of man pantheism is a cold and dreary thing. There is indeed a pleasurable intellectual excitement about the first study of this system, and a man's vanity is greatly gratified, for a time, by the supposed discovery that he is a part of the Divinity: the terms employed in explaining this system, because they have been associated with truth, afford some delightful feeling; the very obscurity of the system to many minds invests it with a charm. Still, a religion which promises no immortality to man, and secures him no communion with a being of infinite excellence, cannot impart permanent and sufficient comfort to him amidst the many and trying vicissitudes through which he is passing. It has been justly said: "The pantheist wanders in a lovely region, where he meets with no friend to cheer, to sympathize, to support, to comfort him. He talks of communion with nature, but his idea is ever evaporating and vanishing into nothing, and the real thought is ever pressed upon him that the whole is an

illusion, since there is no living being to feel responsive to his feelings, and his soul saddens under a sense of utter loneliness. He is like a man shut up in an abode of surpassing magnificence, but without a friend to whom he can unbosom himself; he is worse than Rasselas in his blessed valley. He perceives that all is regular and harmonious, but still there is something wanting: he is alone, and it is not good for man to be alone, in respect either of the creature or the Creator. Such is his feeling, even when nature wears a smiling aspect and events are prosperous; and when the heavens lower and affliction casts its shadows over his path, and all things in the lower world seem dark and dreary and sullen, his melancholy is soured into discontent, and irritated into murmuring and complaint. He complains and no one answers, and his spirit is chafed by its own chidings. Still friendless, he feels now what it is to be friendless in the hour of trial." How superior, then, to the reveries of the pantheist is our Divine Christianity, so congenial to man's convictions, sensibilities, and necessities!—which assures him of the constant protection of an almighty Friend,—one who is present with him in all events; which promises him a home to go to when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved; which persuades him that he shall soon see the face of God and be perfectly satisfied with the beatific vision. The Christian is unwilling, for the sake of a mere unsupported theory, to relinquish the aids, consolations, and hopes of the gospel.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. SYSTEMS OF INFIDELITY. JUDAISM. PAGANISM. MOHAMMEDANISM.—(*Note on Swedenborgianism.*)

THE subject of the foregoing chapter is further discussed in this, viz., Christianity as the true religion because the best. We have just shown the emptiness and insufficiency of pantheism ; and now we proceed to show that the Christian religion is preferable to every other religion which men have professed to receive through the light of nature.

That system of infidelity, according to which God's existence, power, and wisdom are acknowledged, but his moral attributes are denied, is unreasonable and untenable. The attributes of the Deity correspond with the universe over which He presides : as He has a physical creation to control, He must be regarded as possessing wisdom and power ; as He has a moral creation to govern,—composed of wills and affections,—it is reasonable to ascribe to Him moral attributes, such as justice and goodness. We cannot conceive that the Divine Being would have endowed human beings with moral qualities unless He himself possessed them, and conscience bears direct testimony to the moral perfections of God. The Deity displays his moral nature in the government of the world. It is manifest that vice produces misery, and virtue happiness, in the present life. If it be said that this occurs only according to the course of nature, the question arises, who made and governs nature and has established that uniformity of operation which all observe and admire ? The penalties attached to sin forbid us to conclude that the Sovereign of the world is destitute of a moral nature ; and it is far more reasonable to

accept that religion of Christ, whose representations of the Divine Being completely correspond with what we constantly observe in nature and providence, than to adopt any system which denies moral attributes to the Most High.

A system of infidelity that admits the existence of God with all his attributes natural and moral, but denies at the same time the immortality of the human soul, cannot be accepted, because it contradicts the instinctive belief of the human race.

That creed, professedly derived through the light of nature, which concedes to God all his attributes and to man immortality, but denies that retribution extends beyond the present life, is also wholly unreasonable. The advocates of this system find it necessary to affirm that virtue and happiness, as its reward, and vice and misery, as its punishment, are so exactly proportioned to each other in the present state of man's being as to render future retribution unnecessary. It is obvious, however, that in this world men are not rewarded or punished in exact proportion to their deserts; here hardened crime is often found to possess a considerable share of impunity, contentment, and enjoyment. Sin is never punished on earth to the full measure of its desert. Indeed, since retribution exists in the present life, it is probable that it will be conducted on a larger scale in the future and eternal world; that it will be, the dictates of our consciences and the universal opinion of mankind impel us to believe.

Besides the systems which have been already considered, there is one, and only one, other system of religion professedly received through the light of nature that deserves our notice; a system in which God's attributes and man's immortality are admitted, and the possibility of the pardon of man's sin and the purification of his moral nature is affirmed, but which has no reference to a divinely appointed atonement. Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who was born in Wales A.D. 1581, is the author, or at least the most distin-

guished advocate, of this system. Lord Herbert has advanced the following propositions: "That Christianity is the best religion; that his own universal religion agrees wholly with Christianity, and contributes to its establishment; that all revealed religion (meaning Christianity) is absolutely uncertain, and of little or no use; that there is one supreme God, who is chiefly to be worshiped; that piety and virtue are the principal part of his worship; that we must repent of our sins, and if we do so God will pardon them; that there are rewards for good men and punishments for bad men in a future world; that these principles of his universal religion are clearly known to all men." This system certainly contains many truthful elements, but it is not sufficient for man's wants; reason does not assure us that repentance for sin will secure the pardon of it; and reason, unilluminated by revelation, can furnish no hope of the purification of the human soul. Christianity not only embraces but proves all the truths that are contained in Lord Herbert's system, and teaches us what Herbert and reason are unable to teach, that human sin may be, and in what mode it may be, pardoned, and that man's nature may be regenerated, and thus fitted for everlasting happiness. Defective as it is, we doubt whether the creed of Herbert could have originated anywhere but beneath the light of Christianity.

To each one of the systems of religion above considered, it may be objected that it has not been adopted with any great degree of confidence by its advocates, and that it fails to control the conscience, because its hold on the understanding is feeble.

All the proposed systems of natural religion labor under this defect,—they furnish no divinely appointed system of worship. Natural religion has no temples, no altars, no public worship, without the aid of which profound religious knowledge and sentiments cannot be diffused and maintained among mankind.

The substitution of any scheme of infidelity, however its advocates may have professed to learn it from nature, and although it may have been in part borrowed from the holy Scriptures, has always produced the most disastrous moral effects. What have Shaftesbury, Hobbes, or Hume effected for the moral improvement of mankind? The influence of Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot has been only fatal to human morals and happiness. Robert Hall has successfully shown that infidelity in all its forms tends directly to the destruction of moral taste; that it promotes the growth of those vices which are the most hostile to human happiness; that it prevents the growth of noble sentiments and affections; that it poisons the fountains of pure morals, undermines their principles, and destroys their substance. Its reign in one nation was emphatically "a reign of terror,"—that nation whose pillars of state it tore down, the altars of whose religion it overthrew, and the streets of whose cities and whose beautiful fields it deluged with blood. Infidelity destroys the foundations of virtue, Christianity fortifies and defends them; infidelity produces vanity, cruelty, and crime, Christianity diffuses humility, benevolence, holiness; infidelity weakens and loosens the domestic ties, Christianity strengthens and sanctifies them; infidelity tramples on the human law, Christianity respects its majesty; infidelity imparts no consolation in affliction, no hope in death, Christianity sweetens human sorrow, sheds sunshine on the tomb, and casts the light of hope far along the darkness of coming eternity. The considerations just presented show, not only that our religion is to be preferred, but that it is absolutely true.

It has not been the design of anything that has been said to deny the existence of a natural religion or to disparage any of its truths. God has certainly made known his attributes through the workmanship of his hands. It is to be borne in mind, however, that infidels, in forming their systems, have always found it necessary to combine

errors with the truths which nature made known to them; and that the religion of nature at best is defective when regarded as a system of salvation, and can never be received as an adequate substitute for that gospel which reveals to man an atonement for his sins.

All the other religions that are based on supposed revelations from heaven are inferior to Christianity, both in their nature and as to their proofs. Let the most prominent of these pass in rapid review before us.

The Jewish religion was revealed from heaven, was established by miracles, and was confirmed by prophecy. Once it was the only true religion on earth; and of all the religions which existed before the coming of Christ it was incomparably the best. It was, however, only a preparation for a further revelation from heaven, and its types and ceremonies are almost meaningless unless they are expounded by the gospel. The religion of Christ is superior to Judaism, because it embraces all the theological and ethical truth which the latter contains, while it has added to the stock of human knowledge a rich fund of sacred truth. It has also the advantage of requiring and rendering possible a more simple and more spiritual worship than existed among the Jews. Besides, the Jewish religion was manifestly not designed to be permanent, and was suited only to one nation, while Christianity proclaims its superior excellence by affirming its perpetuity, and proving its adaptedness to all the nations of the earth.

The paganism of classic antiquity, like the Parthenon, its most splendid representative, is in ruins. Its oracles became mute when Christianity spoke; its altars shook and crumbled at the triumphant tread of the gospel. All the learning and cunning of its priesthood, all the political strength of the Roman empire, all the historic associations of centuries, which like moss enameled and adorned it, and all the private interests involved in its maintenance, could not preserve it from decay and extinction. It can

never be revived or restored. It is fair to conclude, from the fact that it has been destroyed, and from the manner of its destruction, that its origin was not Divine. Classic paganism never produced a well-attested miracle; its usages were morally corrupt, and its influence was morally debasing; it was pervaded by those pantheistic ideas, the unreasonableness of which has been shown to us; it was polytheistic, and polytheism contradicts the dictates of reason. It is sufficient to say, that no species of modern paganism is to be preferred to that which existed among the most refined and enlightened nations of antiquity.

It might be interesting and instructive, but it is scarcely necessary to the present discussion, to examine Brahmanism,—the religion of the Hindoos; of the inspiration of the Vedas, which constitute the Bible of the Hindoos, there is not the smallest evidence; no well-attested miracle can be adduced in support of it. The religion which it unfolds is manifestly false, because it is pantheistic, representing absorption in the Divinity as the destiny and the highest perfection of the soul; because it is in plain conflict with many of the discoveries and principles of the physical sciences; because some of its rites are cruel and dreadful, and others of them are grossly licentious; because it has not succeeded in raising the people, who have long lived under its influence, from intellectual and moral debasement. Booddhism, which is an offspring of Brahmanism, is not at all superior to it in its evidences, qualities, or effects.

There are, perhaps, none in Christian lands who are not prepared to admit that Christianity is, in every point of view, to be preferred as a religion to Mohammedanism. It were unfair to deny to the author of the Mohammedan religion extraordinary force of character, great talents, or even genius itself. The moral character of the sage of Mecca is not, however, entitled to unmingled admiration. He was probably neither altogether hypocritical nor altogether fanatical, but hypocrisy and fanaticism were strangely

blended in his character, purposes, and acts. It can be easily proved that he performed many deeds of cruelty, and that his nature and life were grossly sensual. We mention his passion for Zeinab, the wife of his emancipated slave and adopted son Zeid, indulged without regard to a relationship which the Arabs had hitherto held inviolable, as a violation of all decency and all justice, and as fixing an indelible stain on his reputation. It is well known that his weakness for the female sex increased with the progress of his life and the increase of his years. There is surely nothing in the character of Mahomet to lead us to regard him as emphatically "the prophet" of God. If he was not inspired, the religion he established cannot be accepted as true, and he has wrought no well-attested miracle in support of his claims to inspiration. The Koran certainly bears no marks, either in its style or matter, of having been dictated by God, although it contains many valuable truths that are borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures. Islamism is preferable to many of the surrounding idolatries; beneath the crescent literature has flourished to no inconsiderable degree. In no respect, however, has the Arabian religion exerted an influence as salutary as that of the religion of Christ. It furnishes no one good moral precept besides those ethical rules which the Christian religion had already presented. On the other hand, it panders to some of the worst passions of human nature; it fosters sensuality to a degree that shocks and disgusts the virtuous mind: and it is unreasonable to think that a religion so bloody and sensual had its origin from God. Its success affords no evidence of its Divinity, since it is congenial to corrupt human nature, and has made its way, not by means of moral suasion or miraculous evidences, but by the sword. If it is not eminently absurd to claim for the Turk moral equality with the Briton, it is the highest folly to think of comparing the Koran with the Bible, the pure precepts of the Bible with the moral code of Mussulmans, or Mahomet

himself with Moses! It is supreme wickedness to think of comparing the cruel and licentious Arabian impostor with Jesus Christ.

If the reader shall have devised for himself another scheme of religion than has been spoken of in these pages, or find some other religious system that has been embraced in the world, he will discover in it at least two great defects: 1. That it contains no perfect code of morals, unless it has been borrowed from the holy Scriptures; and 2. That it presents to him no sufficient atonement for sin. The doctrine of redemption, which chiefly distinguishes Christianity, alone renders it superior to all other religions. The following words of Addison fitly close this chapter: "As a thinking man cannot but be very much affected at the idea of appearing in the presence of that Being whom none can see and live, he must be much more affected when he considers that this Being which he appears before will examine all the actions of his past life, and reward or punish him accordingly. I must confess that I think there is no scheme of religion besides that of Christianity which can possibly support the most virtuous person under the thought. Let a man's innocence be what it will, —let his virtues rise to the highest pitch of perfection attainable in this life,—there will be still in him so many secret sins, so many human frailties, so many offenses of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, so many unguarded words and thoughts, and, in short, so many defects in his best actions, that without the advantages of such an expiation and atonement as Christianity has revealed to us, it is impossible that he should be cleared before his sovereign Judge, or that he should be able to stand in his sight. Our holy religion suggests the only means whereby our guilt may be taken away and our imperfect obedience accepted."

Note to Chapter XVII.—We have not deemed an inquiry into the nature of Swedenborgianism necessary to the completeness of the

discussion of the foregoing chapter ; yet some notice of this religious faith may not prove unacceptable or uninstructional to the reader. It may be regarded rather as a corruption of Christianity than as a totally new and different religion. As, however, it claims to be founded on new revelations from the eternal world, its real tendency is to subvert the gospel.

Emanuel Swedenborg, the author of the system under review, born in Stockholm in 1688, was carefully educated in his childhood, and became one of the most learned men of his day. During the prime of his life his attention was given exclusively to the physical sciences; from the fifty-sixth year of his life to the close of it he devoted himself to the study of religion. Emerson says: "There is a common portrait of him in antique coat and wig, but the face has a wandering and vacant air." In his intellectual constitution, the imagination preponderated, and yet it was undirected by good taste, for his style is execrable, and his conceptions are for the most part destitute of poetic beauty. By most persons he will always be regarded as having been insane. His moral character has never been successfully impeached; his life is said to have been pure, and his manners are said to have been urbane. He had no worldly advantages to gain by imposture, and it were unfair to accuse him of dishonesty or ambition.

Swedenborgianism has made considerable progress in the world. It has been embraced by at least one of the kings of Sweden; in England as well as Sweden it has found a number of adherents; in America it has found favor with some men of talent and learning; in the East Indies it has found a home and welcome. For minds of a certain cast it has peculiar fascinations; it gratifies the curiosity of some who wish to discover more of the eternal world than God has chosen to reveal; it soothes the wounded domestic affections by producing a belief that as distinct communion can be had with departed as with living relatives and friends; it furnishes the half-religious with an apology for turning away from the holy Scriptures; and persons of defective religious experience and unsteady religious opinions are greatly tempted to flee to it for relief; it is especially attractive to those who have in their nature some taint of insanity.

As a commentator, Swedenborg is fanciful and unsound. His claims to inspiration are totally unworthy of confidence. Inspiration is claimed for him on the ground that he knew certain events at the time they were occurring at a distance, and that he foretold certain future events. If, however, a few lucky conjectures in a lifetime entitle a man to the claim of inspiration, each succeeding generation may have a new religion. We cannot now cross-examine the witness

who testified to Swedenborg's contemporaneous knowledge of a fire at Stockholm when many miles distant from the city. The prediction of the time of Wesley's death—even if it were fully proved that Swedenborg really made it—may be regarded as only a fortunate guess. We cannot admit the claims of any new revelation, unless they are made good by palpable and indisputable miracles. If Swedenborg really had communication with beings of the spiritual world, the fact was wonderful, but not necessarily miraculous. We cannot receive the information given by them as a revelation from God, since they may have been evil and not good spirits, and may have communicated falsehood, not truth. Says Emerson (*fas est et ab hoste doceri*): "For the anomalous pretension of revelations of the other world, only his probity and genius can entitle it to any regard. His revelations destroy their credit by running into detail. If a man say that the Holy Ghost has informed him that the last judgment (or the last of the judgments) took place in 1757, or that the Dutch in the other world live in a heaven by themselves, and the English in a heaven by themselves, I reply that the Spirit which is Holy is reserved, taciturn, and deals in laws. The rumors of ghosts and hobgoblins gossip and tell fortunes: the teachings of the High Spirit are abstemious, and, in regard to particulars, negative." It is reasonable to think that if the divine of Stockholm had been chosen by the Almighty as the channel of a new revelation to mankind, he would have received it, not through the medium of inferior spirits, as he pretended, but as the apostles of Christ received that revelation which they were commissioned to communicate to the world,—directly from the Holy Spirit himself.

That Swedenborg was not inspired is proved by the fact that many of the doctrines which he taught are in conflict with those which are taught in the Scriptures, which he professed to receive as a Divine revelation. As to his opinions on the subject of the Trinity, he was a Sabellian,—denying the distinction of persons in the Godhead. Lutheran as he professed to be, he disowned the doctrines of the atonement and justification by faith alone as taught by the great reformer; he rejected also the doctrines of a general judgment and the resurrection, as they have always been understood in the Christian church; his conceptions of spiritual things are gross and materialistic. It is nothing more than fair to say, however, that the moral precepts unfolded by Swedenborg are pure; that the influence of much that he has written is well adapted to elevate the soul and cultivate its best affections; and that he points out, with great distinctness, the necessary connection between a pure life on earth and a happy immortality.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MYSTERIES OF REVELATION.

WE have thus far presented an argument in behalf of Christianity, drawn from its nature,—its correspondence with the character of God as reason makes it known,—its correspondence with the necessities of man,—its moral effects. We have not attempted an exhaustive discussion of the internal evidences of our religion; but we are confident that we have presented a complete argument which cannot be directly assailed with success. The gospel of Christ being maintained by a positive argument so clear and conclusive, objections brought against it ought to be powerful indeed, to entitle them to respect from a mind earnestly in pursuit of truth. It is not denied that objections may be urged against the Christian religion. Moral reasoning is employed in the discovery of moral truth, and that species of reasoning admits of arguments on both sides of every question about which it is employed. That Christianity has had objections brought against it ought to bring no suspicion on its truth, since there is no opinion in natural theology, ethics, or jurisprudence that has not been controverted. It is in the nature of things impossible that Christianity should bring to every mind irresistible evidence of its truth, unless we suppose the moral character of men to be miraculously changed; because evil moral feelings may induce any understanding with which they are connected to resist any moral truth. It is also reasonable to suppose that God has made the possibility of rejecting the evidence of revelation a part of man's moral probation. As

objections against the Christian religion do induce many to reject it, especially of that class of persons whose vices render them most averse to the gospel, it becomes necessary for us to examine the most prominent and plausible of these objections.

It is urged as an objection to Christianity, that the system itself, and the Scriptures which disclose it, contain many *obscurities*. It is contended that a revelation from God ought to be so plain that the understanding of the most illiterate human being could apprehend the whole of it in an instant. There are two kinds of obscurities in the Scriptures: 1. Those which by effort and with Divine assistance may be removed; and 2. Mysteries or truths which must remain forever inscrutable to the human understanding. Let us direct our attention first to what may be called the vincible difficulties of revelation.

There are many portions of the sacred volume which, obscure at first, may be understood by means of diligent study and through the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit. Says Solomon: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but it is the glory of the king to find it out;" which words Lord Bacon understands as teaching that God has thrown obscurities over science and religion, and that it is the part of human wisdom to penetrate or remove them.

It is a sufficient answer to the objection under consideration, that all those portions of the Scriptures which are indispensable to salvation may be apprehended by the feeblest and most untutored understanding. The method of salvation through the merits of a Redeemer may be easily rendered as intelligible to the most simple cottager as to the profoundest scholar, and has generally been best understood by those pious souls who have been the least distinguished by genius and learning. Of all books containing great truths the Bible is the most intelligible, and,

on this account, it is more than any other book interesting to the illiterate.

To render all the Scriptures equally intelligible to all men, it would have been necessary on the part of God either to reveal only the plainest truths, such as the feeblest minds could apprehend, or miraculously to elevate the lowest minds to a very high position. It is unreasonable to expect God either to limit his revelation, because all men could not at once receive the whole of it, or miraculously to change the intellectual nature of the whole human race. The book of nature, which it is the manifest design of the Deity that men should study and contemplate, has many obscurities; but it would be grossly absurd to affirm that the universe is not the work of God because the page of science is not unrolled to the eye of every peasant and child. It is asking too much to demand that every sentence of God's word should be intelligible to every mind, without effort on its part and whatever may be the defects of the moral character associated with it.

The vincible difficulties of revelation are wisely adapted to exercise and invigorate the *intellects* of men. Utterances that are instantly understood have little effect in expanding the mental faculties; study gives vigor to them. The very difficulty of apprehending some truths fastens them more deeply in the mind: the knowledge which is derived from the ancient classics is more deeply impressed on the memory, from the very difficulty of understanding the strange languages in which they are conveyed.

The obscurities of revelation are subservient to the moral improvement of men. God has chosen to reward the study of his word and devout prayer for a better apprehension of it, with richer communications of his truth, and thus presents a most powerful motive to the assiduous study of the Scriptures and to prayer for Divine illumination. An increase of moral purity is favorable to a better intelligence of God's word; and the difficulties of Divine

revelation, doubtless, exist for the purpose of prompting men to seek that increase. Many portions of God's word cannot be understood until they have been illustrated by a high Christian experience, or until the Christian character reaches a certain stage of development; and they who would understand them are thus stimulated to seek high attainments in grace. Patience, one of the most valuable of the Christian graces, is susceptible of vast improvement; the intricacies and obscurities of Divine providence are manifestly designed to sustain and nurture this grace. Nothing also serves more effectively to develop it than the difficulties of revelation. Finding obscurities in the volume which he most loves, the Christian determines to wait patiently for a more favorable season for the discovery of the truth, assured that it will be unfolded to him, if not in this world, at last in heaven, to brighten the bliss and glory of his immortality. It has been objected that the obscurities of revelation have given rise to those controversies which have raged with volcanic fury in the bosom of the church, and lacerated its peace. But controversy need not be conducted with a bitter spirit, and has often resulted in binding in closer fellowship those who have engaged in it. It has subserved many valuable purposes in the church of Christ. "Controversy," says Lord Bacon, "winnows the truth." It fastens the attention of men on the Divine word, and renders many truths, which without it would have lain dormant in the memory, powerfully effective in the soul. Divine truth would be far less frequently examined by us if we were permitted to believe that we could by no possibility be mistaken in regard to it.

It ought not to surprise us that God has chosen to make his revelation a means of *pleasure*, as He had made it a means of instruction to man. We know what satisfaction the student of nature derives from the conquest of the scientific difficulties that lie in his pathway; that he finds in his mental triumph an exultation as great as that of the

warrior in the day of his victory,—a pleasure which he could not attain if his mental operations were altogether unimpeded. The student of revelation finds a similar satisfaction in overcoming the difficulties which he encounters in his sacred investigations: no man receives so much enjoyment as he, when the obscurities that have puzzled him disappear, and all becomes luminous where all had been dark,—not the historian when some newly-discovered volume throws a flood of light on the pages of some doubtful history,—nor the ethnologist when he successfully unravels the intricacies of philology,—nor the astronomer when, in the application of the laws of mathematics to the mechanism of the universe, he brings into light some fact or some law which seems to bind all the creation in harmony. The difficulties of revelation impart to God's word that perpetual novelty which distinguishes it from all other volumes, and which many have regarded as a conclusive proof of its heavenly inspiration. Who would not be disquieted to find that he had learned all that could be known of the sacred Scriptures, and that he had no further pleasure to anticipate from the study of that volume which has already afforded him so much delight?

It is to be considered that many portions of the sacred volume, which are not necessarily and forever incomprehensible to men, are designed, not for the present age, but for coming generations. Especially is this true of those prophecies which relate to the future; and although all Scripture is profitable, many things in the sacred volume may be obscure to us, because they were designed especially for generations of men that have long since passed from the stage of human action.

Patient study and earnest prayer would remove from the Scriptures many of those obscurities about which we hear so much complaint.

The *mysteries* of revelation, or those difficulties of the Scriptures which seem to be insuperable to the human

understanding, furnish no valid objection to the truth of revelation.

The mysteries of revelation are many,—to some extent mystery is connected with almost every doctrine that it utters. The nature of the Divine essence, and of some at least of the Divine attributes, the trinity of persons in the Godhead, and the incarnation of Divinity, the manner in which God exercises a providential government over the family of man without doing violence to the human will, the harmony of the Divine decrees with man's freedom and responsibility,—these are subjects entirely and forever inscrutable to us. The permission of sin by a Being of infinite holiness and power, and the fact that a being perfectly holy has yielded to the temptations of sin, are also mysterious to us; nor can we trace the mode of the purification of the human soul under a system of grace,—the movements of the Holy Spirit as He proceeds in his regenerative work.

God, in giving a revelation to man, was under no obligation to explain already-discovered mysteries, or to make every new thing that He disclosed plain to the understandings of men. He had a right to determine how far his revelation should extend, as He had a right to determine whether He would give a revelation at all. He has made known to man all that is necessary to his salvation, and we ought not to complain that He has not fully gratified our curiosity, since to do so was not the design of his revelation. As well might we find fault with God because He has not revealed to us the extent of the organized universe, the exact location of the heaven of the redeemed, or all the pursuits and occupations of the angels.

Many of the doctrines of revelation are necessarily mysterious to man. We could not completely comprehend them, however they might be arrayed before us, on account of the feebleness of our intellects. Some of them are unintelligible to even the angels of heaven, because their

powers are finite. To know all mysteries, we must cease to be men, and become Divine. The attributes of omniscience and omnipresence are incomprehensible to finite beings, because infinite attributes, and other truths of revelation we are unable to comprehend on account of their infinitude. Around the throne of God is "the majesty of darkness," the grandeur of gloom; and until we can reach the utmost verge of infinity, and grasp immensity, and measure eternity, we must confess our littleness and acknowledge that God is past finding out. If God himself is incomprehensible, we may reasonably expect the methods of his providence and grace to be alike so. We ought not to desire, if the thing were possible, to so contract the doctrines of revelation as to bring them within our grasp. Shall we destroy the sublimity of the ocean by making it so shallow that we can wade through it? Shall we destroy the grandeur of the firmament by bringing the stars so low that we may climb over them? We have no more right to demand an acquaintance with the mysteries of God's word than the pismire would have to demand to be changed into an eagle, or to be made capable of winding through the intricacies of the calculus. As well might men complain that God has placed a limitation to their physical powers, so that they cannot travel from world to world, as complain that He has not given them that more than angelic vision whereby they could pry into the secret things which belong to himself.

The mysteries of revelation are *in analogy with nature* around us,—that nature which we recognize as the workmanship of God. In every object we survey, from the loftiest forest-tree to the humblest herb, from man, the masterpiece of the lower creation, to the meanest insect that crawls beneath our feet, we find something impenetrable to our understandings. Science does not remove, but only multiplies, the mysteries of nature. The philosopher is compelled to admit that after he has conducted his in-

vestigations to the utmost attainable point, there remain wonders innumerable which he has no hope of explaining. The astronomer, who surveys the boundless heavens, and the botanist, who examines the minute flower, must alike submit in their inquiries to the decree of the great Creator,—“Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.” We know the qualities of matter, but who can understand or describe its substratum? We know that one body impinging on another will put it in motion, but who can tell how it is that impulse produces motion? Who can explain the causes of gravitation? To whom is not vegetable or animal life a mystery? The essence of the soul as distinguished from its properties is entirely unknown to us, although we necessarily believe in its existence; and no man can point out the connecting link between the soul and the body, or understand the reciprocal action of material and immaterial things on each other. Mystery envelops the subject of the human will: it is equally difficult to determine how a being governed certainly by motives can be free, and how a being not governed by the greater motive can be a moral agent. The human understanding can indeed know nothing but in part: the scholar may move a step farther into mystery than the illiterate man, but he cannot move out of it; the man of learning finds himself surrounded by more mysteries than the unlearned; you widen your circle of knowledge only to render the contiguous circumference of mystery that lies without it more immense. It is unreasonable in men to refuse to be saved because God, in seeking their salvation, has not deviated from that method of concealing himself and his ways which He has elsewhere observed; if the Scriptures contained no mysteries we should have reason on that account to suspect the Divinity of their origin, since in that case they would be so little like the rest of God's creation.

That natural religion, the truth of which most men admit, embraces mysteries. Who can understand how the

universe was formed from nothing? The eternity and infinity of God are entirely inexplicable to us. The omnipresence of the Deity—the fact that He is everywhere present and yet existing without extension or parts—is as mysterious as the doctrine of the Trinity itself. The greatest of modern metaphysicians has taught that there is not a difficulty in theology that is not found in philosophy (and he means to include in that term natural religion). Predestination is a mystery of revelation that is especially offensive to the minds of many. It is equally a mystery of natural religion. Reason teaches that the Creator has formed the universe on a definite plan and for a definite purpose, and He must consequently have some mode of governing or controlling his moral subjects. Reason—our own consciousness—teaches that man is free. Reason then teaches, as the Scriptures teach, that God has some method of governing his moral subjects without violating their free agency; otherwise one of two alternatives must be adopted, either that God is not sovereign or man is not free. The difficulty lies in reconciling the Divine sovereignty with man's free agency; neither reason nor revelation, although they both teach both, points out the mode of their reconciliation. It deserves our notice that revelation has cleared up so many of the difficulties of natural religion, that its votaries have little reason to complain of the comparatively few obscurities which the Scriptures present; they have removed many more difficulties than they have originated.

There is no positive system of infidelity that does not include mysteries, and it is impossible to propose a religion entirely divested of the mysterious. It may be safely affirmed that every infidel, even the atheist, has embraced in his creed propositions or doctrines as inexplicable as anything which has found a place within God's written revelation.

Christianity has certainly introduced new mysteries, and necessarily, because it has opened new fields of truth, for

mystery surrounds all truth as the sky the earth. Christianity brings us nearer the infinite, and, of course, into closer contact with what is incomprehensible. It reveals the grandest truths, makes the brightest disclosures of the Divinity, goes farthest up into the Godhead, and therefore we ought to expect it to contain the very greatest mysteries. The highest mountains are lost in the clouds; it has been said: "Like the mountains which, the higher they are, cast the larger shadows, the gospel is the more obscure and mysterious on account of its sublimity."

The mysteries of revelation are adapted to produce the best moral effects in the Christian believer. There are many mysteries in nature which we must recognize if we would attain prosperity or even preserve life itself. The mysteries of God's word inspire adoration to the Supreme Being, promote humility, which, if not piety itself, is its chief support and most graceful adornment, and produce a spirit of acquiescence in the inexplicable dealings of Divine providence. That which is obscure in the Divine nature inspires even loftier sentiments than that which is intelligible, just as the clouds, which move majestically along the firmament, awaken emotions of greater sublimity than the light which diffuses itself over the newly-awakened and rejoicing earth. It is by means of the mysteries of revelation that we may assure ourselves of the reality of our faith; for when we accept them, we know that we believe on the authority of God; but when we believe that which is divested of mystery, it is difficult for us to determine whether we are trusting simply to our own understandings, or submitting ourselves to the oracles of God. Certain it is that faith is better disciplined and more invigorated by receiving the mysteries of revelation than by merely yielding assent to those truths of the Scriptures which nature had previously taught or reason now confirms.

After all, the mysteries of God's word are but an excess

of light. It is not because the Deity is robed in darkness and wrapped in storm that He is seen by us with so little distinctness, but it is the splendor of the glory which invests Him that dazzles our vision, and thus renders Him obscure.

CHAPTER XIX.

DIFFICULTIES OF REVELATION. TRINITY. GEOLOGY. UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

THE subject of the present chapter is that which was discussed in part in the last,—viz., the difficulties of revelation.

It is affirmed that many doctrines and facts are recorded in the Scriptures which are contradicted by the plain teachings of common sense and of science. Only a few of the alleged contradictions referred to deserve any serious consideration.

Truths are never contradictory. If two contradictory doctrines are found in the Scriptures, one (or both) of them must be false; so also if any fact recorded in the Scriptures were contradicted by nature, we could not accept that fact as true. If the Scriptures contain contradictions, they ought not to be regarded as a revelation from God. The Bible teaches many things about which reason is silent and unable to yield any confirmatory response, but nothing that reason contradicts.

Nothing has more perplexed minds honest and earnest in pursuit of truth than the doctrine of the Trinity,—a doctrine which must ever remain mysterious to man, at least in his present state of existence. It is probable that the loftiest spirits of the universe cannot comprehend it in all its amplitude. It is embraced in that subject of the Divine

nature, which is the most exalted, the most mysterious, and the most difficult of all subjects, because the vastest that man or angel can be called to contemplate. Although, however, this doctrine is enveloped in mystery, it involves no contradiction: reason cannot affirm or confirm it, but reason cannot contradict it.

It has been objected to the doctrine of the Trinity that it proposes the absurdity that three may be one and one may be three. If it had been affirmed that the persons of the Trinity are three and one in the same sense, there would have been manifest contradiction; but no such thing has been affirmed. Trinitarians do not believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three different substances; if they did, they would be justly exposed to the charge of polytheism. They believe that the three persons are the same (not merely similar) in substance and equal in power and glory. It has been the belief of the church in all ages that the whole substance or essence of the Deity is in the Father, the whole of it in the Son, and the whole of it in the Holy Spirit. The *sameness of substance* preserves the *Divine unity*, so that the *difference of persons* does not conflict with it.

According to what is perhaps the most orthodox and approved opinion, the attributes of the Deity constitute his essence. Adopting that opinion, there is no contradiction in the doctrine of the Trinity as held by us, since we recognize all the Divine attributes as belonging equally to each of the persons of the Trinity. In the opinion of some divines, the essence of the Divinity is to be distinguished from his attributes, just as the essence of the human mind is distinguished from its faculties or properties. It is not surprising, since all agree that man was made in the image of his Maker, that some should adopt the opinion that the Creator and the rational creature have each an essence of his own distinguishable from his attributes or qualities. The faculties of the human mind are by psychologists

called phenomenal, and it may be that there is no profaneness in calling the attributes of God phenomenal, although the idea must be ever entertained that, if phenomenal, they are eternally so. If the attributes of God are phenomenal, the persons of the Trinity, which are sustained by the same essence which sustains the Divine attributes, may be also phenomenal (of course, to avoid Sabellianism, these persons must be regarded as eternal phenomena); and if there is no contradiction in saying that there exist many Divine attributes, there is, for the same reason, no contradiction in saying that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead. The persons of the Trinity and the attributes of God are certainly not the same; they may differ widely; but since, as varying phenomena of one Divine essence, the *attributes* of God do not interfere with the unity of the Godhead, so, as varying phenomena of the one Divine essence, the *persons* of the Trinity do not contradict the unity of the Godhead. The whole Divine essence is in each Divine attribute when it acts; and the whole Divine essence is, and has been from eternity, in each of the persons of the Trinity. We are not willing to commit ourselves to the opinion that the attributes and persons of the Deity are phenomenal; but we would rather embrace it than renounce the doctrine of the Trinity: we reason with those who do embrace it, and we deem the *argumentum ad hominem* admissible even in theological discussions.

In considering the doctrine of the Trinity we must ever bear in mind that reasoning which applies to the finite does not always apply to the infinite. There was great force in the words of a distinguished American statesman, when he replied to a Unitarian friend who affirmed that Trinitarians made three one and one three, "You and I know very little of the arithmetic of heaven." The author of "Christian Theism" has expanded this thought in the following words: "The persons of the Godhead, though three, are yet one, because there can be but one Infinite Being. There

is nothing irrational in the doctrine. The common difficulty arises from extending reason beyond its province, and from the application of the infinite to those principles of judgment which we find to be true of the finite. Things finite are limited in time and space, finite minds in the extent and sphere of their powers, and, consequently, also in time and space. These limitations, then, distinguish one from another, as individuals of a plurality. The heathen therefore, whose gods were beings of limited power and prescribed authority, consistently believed in a plurality of gods,—a god of heaven, a god of hell, a god of the sea, a god of war. But once admit that God is infinite, and our principles of reason, which are competent to judge of the finite, and to carry us from the finite to the infinite, become incompetent to understand the internal nature of the Deity. They can assure us that two finites are distinct, but cannot pronounce it irrational to say that two infinities are essentially one. It is well known to mathematicians that the common rules of numbers are inapplicable to infinities; it is no less conceivable that there may be internal relations in the unknown essence of the Deity which may be partially and distinctly represented by the human distinction of personality; though quite incomprehensible to us, yet these distinctions be compatible with the Divine unity. . . . The persons of the Godhead, each possessing the same infinite attributes, cannot be essentially distinct from one another. All we can pretend to say is this, that the Divine persons are not three in the same sense in which they are one."

It has been affirmed that the Scriptures are contradicted by science, inasmuch as the sun and moon are represented in the book of Joshua as standing still. Some have supposed that the passage here referred to is a mere poetical quotation or allusion, and, if it be so, the objection to inspiration derived from it is at once removed. It were puerile to say that it is unscientific to affirm that the sun stood

still inasmuch as he is already stationary, since in all languages of men, and even in the writings of modern men of science, the sun is spoken of as rising and setting, as though he and not the earth had motion. He rises and sets relatively, not absolutely. So he is represented by Joshua as relatively standing still. But it is declared an impossibility that the earth should have stood still so as to present the phenomena described in the book of Joshua. Here we touch the subject of miracles, which we purpose to discuss in the progress of this work. God, who put the earth in motion at first, is certainly able to retard or stop its revolution on its axis, and it devolves on the objector to prove that He has never done so. The sacred record does not, however, require us to believe that the earth, in the time of Joshua, actually ceased its motion, but only that, by the exercise of Divine power, the sun and moon were made to *appear* to stand still, and that their shining on the earth was protracted.

The objection to the truth of revelation, which is drawn from geology, deserves our consideration. When first presented, it had great influence in fostering skepticism; but since it has been more fully examined, it has lost its force. It is objected that Moses has made a mistake as to the time of the creation of the world, representing it as occurring about six or seven thousand years ago, whereas geology teaches that many hundreds of thousands of years have elapsed since the creation of the earth. A very high degree of respect is due to the opinion that the earth has stood for millions of ages. Still, it must be borne in mind that the science of geology is yet in its infancy, and that a few slight discoveries might overturn many of its theories. We must take the liberty of saying that many geologists have expressed themselves, on a new and difficult subject, with more confidence than the modesty of true science and the extent of their observations and the force of their reasoning would seem to justify. It is gratifying, nevertheless,

to know that the wisest and best of modern geologists have not regarded their scientific theories as conflicting with revelation, and that, so far from finding in their favorite science anything to shake their faith in the Scriptures, they have found in it much to enlarge their views of natural theology, much to kindle the fervor of their pious devotion, and much to increase their confidence in the book of inspiration. One mistake that is common let us here correct. It is that of supposing that all the physical sciences, as they are presented to us, are infallible. Mathematics are, indeed, infallible; but much of what is called science is not sustained by any such amount of argument and evidence as that which supports the credibility of the Christian religion.

It is a sufficient answer to the argument drawn from geology against revelation that the Scriptures nowhere affirm that the matter of the world was created only six thousand years ago; they do not inform us at what period it was created. Several methods of reconciling geology and the Scriptures have been proposed. It is sufficient for the defense of Christianity that one method of their reconciliation should exist. Let us take that which more than half a century ago was presented by Dr. Chalmers, that wonderful man, who explored every cavern of thought before he covered it with effulgence and glory. Chalmers says: "The following are the two first verses of the book of Genesis: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' Now, let it be supposed that the work of the first day in the Mosaic account of the creation begins with the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters. The detailed history of creation in the first chapter begins at the middle of the second verse; and what precedes may be understood as an introductory sentence, by which we are most appo-

sitely told both that God created all things at first, and that afterwards, by what interval of time is not specified, the earth lapsed into a chaos, from the darkness and disorder of which the present system or economy was made to arise. Between the initial act and the details of Genesis the world, for aught we know, might have been the theatre of many revolutions, the traces of which geology may still investigate, and to which, in fact, she has confidently appealed as the vestiges of so many continents that have now passed away." The argument just stated answers the objections not only of geologists, but of astronomers, with respect to the antiquity of the physical universe; for, from the fact that light from remote nebulae or stars that has just reached our earth must have traveled for two hundred thousand years before reaching it, we are compelled to conclude that those heavenly bodies have been in existence during that immense period. Let it not be supposed that the recent discoveries of geology have induced Christian theologians to adopt the opinion that the material universe has been for ages in existence. To suppose that all the universe was created and organized at once is to imagine too great a crowding together of events. Many of the early writers in the Christian church interpreted the first chapter of Genesis substantially as it has been interpreted by Chalmers; and many modern divines, uninfluenced by geology, have believed in the great antiquity of both the heavens and the earth. It is most reasonable to believe that our world was, not created, but reorganized to become the dwelling-place of man, six thousand years ago.

New as the science of geology is, it furnishes strong confirmation of the truth of revelation; its harmony with the word of God is astonishing. It proves that *miracles* are possible and credible; that God has directly interposed to exert his power otherwise than by merely sustaining the universe as it had existed; that He has been, during the last seven thousand years, engaged in the work of creation.

No power in nature can create a new species of animal, and, as scientific men have agreed, no species of animal can be transmuted into another. Geology, however, teaches that new species of animals have been at various times introduced on the earth ; and as we can ascribe their introduction to no other cause, we must ascribe it to the power of God. If it has been proved that God has exerted his creative power on the earth again and again since its creation, there is no difficulty in supposing that He may have exerted that power eighteen hundred years ago,—when the Redeemer was born and performed his achievements. The exercise of creative power on earth is, it is scarcely necessary to say, a miracle. Thus we see that geology overthrows the opinion of the atheist, who contends for an infinite series of human beings, and at the same time shows the possibility of all the Divine interpositions which are alleged to have been connected with the introduction and establishment of the Christian religion.

Geology also renders probable the coming *destruction of the world by fire* ; thus affording evidence of the truth of the scriptural prophecy that on the day of final judgment “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” Sir Charles Lyell has said that “when we consider the combustible nature of the elements of the earth, we may be allowed to share the astonishment of Pliny, that a single day should pass without a general conflagration.” He says that the earth’s crust must ultimately fall in, and regards the destruction of the world by fire as an inevitable catastrophe. Let us here say that it has been shown that the combined researches of certain astronomers and geologists furnish, by fair inference, confirmation of the Mosaic account of the reorganization of the world. Astronomy has shown that many of the fixed stars or suns, which have been obscured for a long period, have been rekindled ; that it is

possible that our sun, after it had been obscured for a season, was rekindled about the time of the creation of man. Geologists have shown that our sun was actually obscured about that time, and that the time of the sun's last obscuration was "a period of universal darkness and universal death"—the *tohu va-bohu* of Moses, when "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The limits which we have prescribed to ourselves have forbidden our stating more fully the arguments which learned writers on the subject have presented for the purpose of showing to what an extent the Mosaic account of the creation harmonizes with the teachings of geology and astronomy.

It has been objected to the truth of revelation, that the scriptural account of the *unity of the human race* conflicts with the teachings of science. So warmly has the objection alluded to been urged during recent years that in a work like this it may seem to demand not only a consideration, but a full discussion. To consider in detail all the arguments that have been brought to bear on this subject would, however, require a larger space than we can afford to give it, and we must refer the reader to the well-known and ably-written volumes, published during the last few years, in which it has been thoroughly discussed. We hope to give such an outline of the general argument as may lead every honest understanding to a right conclusion with respect to the important question before us.

The Bible certainly teaches the unity of the human race; and Christian theologians of every age have so understood it. Adam and Eve are represented by Moses as the parents of the family of man. Eve is styled, in the book of Genesis, "the mother of all living." The apostle Paul, at Athens, declared that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." That sin which is inherited by all the races of mankind alike is said to have flowed from him that offended in Eden; and that

curse which has blighted the happiness of all men descended from him. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." Adam is represented in the Scriptures as the head of all sinning men, and Christ as the head of all the redeemed. The Saviour manifestly came into the world to bring salvation only to the descendants of Adam: descended himself from the first pair, who had lived in Paradise, it behooved Him to be, and He was (with the exception of sin), in all things like his brethren, and He came to redeem only the nature of which He partook himself, and the beings who were called his brethren because they had a common ancestry with himself. But Christ is called in the Scriptures the Saviour of all men, and that He designed his salvation for all nations is evident from the fact that He commanded it to be preached to all: the conclusion, therefore, is inevitable that the Scriptures teach that all men have a common ancestry with Christ, or are, like Him, the descendants of Adam. To deny the unity of the human race is, then, to deny the fact of redemption, because it is to bring into discredit the whole of our professed revelation. If the opinion could be adopted that Adam was the progenitor of only the white races, the just conclusion from it would be that Christ is the Saviour of only the white races, —a conclusion which the Scriptures do not permit, and from which all our better feelings instantly revolt: experience has shown that men of all nations are morally depraved and subject to death, and that they may all experience the consolations, the hopes, and the sanctifying influence of the gospel.

Before we proceed to discuss the question of the unity of the race simply as a question of science or of confessedly uninspired history, let us say that, as it can be nothing more than doubtful to all who do not take the affirmative side of it, it ought to be submitted to the Scriptures for decision, because they contain the earliest records and con-

stitute in part the oldest history of the race, and because the probability of the truth of their testimony on the subject is great in proportion to the probability of their inspiration,—which latter probability is rendered great by arguments numerous, varied, and forcible. The evidence that can disprove a scriptural statement ought to be of the clearest and most satisfactory kind, such as to exclude all doubt. Let us also say that if the varieties which exist among men cannot be reconciled with the unity of the race on scientific grounds, rather than deny a scriptural fact, and in so doing disown revelation, it would be more reasonable to ascribe these varieties to a miraculous cause,—to believe, as has been suggested by some, that God, at the time of the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of men, imposed on human beings an organic law which has operated to produce all the diversities among races which we witness,—especially to believe that the descendants of Ham have been degraded by a Divine curse miraculously executed upon them.

Let us now proceed to consider our subject as it appears in the light of secular history and of science. We shall first consider the arguments which may be adduced in favor of the unity of the race, and then the objections which have been urged against it.

We affirm that all the various races of mankind belong to the same species: by belonging to the same species, we mean that they are of the same origin, or descended from the same pair. When we use the word species with reference to other animals, we wish it to be understood also in the same sense.

The question before us ought not, certainly, to be decided by mere authority: it is pleasing, however, to know, and it ought to influence our judgments to a degree, that although the subject of diversity of races has been greatly agitated and discussed during recent days, the great majority of scientific men adhere to the time-honored opinion that all

mankind are the offspring of a common parentage. Prichard and Bachman, who have studied this subject profoundly, deserve our high respect as authorities,—both of whom maintain the unity of the race. Humboldt, the great writer of the “Cosmos,” who has not been regarded as in any eminent degree prejudiced in favor of the Christian religion, says: “So long as attention was directed solely to the extremes in varieties of color and of form, and to the vividness of the first impression of the senses, the observer was naturally disposed to regard races rather as originally different species than as varieties. In my opinion, however, more powerful arguments can be advanced in favor of the unity of the human races.” Even Sir Charles Lyell, who may be said to follow science recklessly wherever it may lead, speaks of the theory of the origin of all men from a single pair as a theory to which, for his part, he could “never see any ethnological or physiological objection, provided time enough be allowed for the slow growth of races.”

The traditions and histories of nations confirm the opinion that all mankind have had a common origin. Every nation has a tradition of a golden age of the race, an era of human innocence, that points back to Eden. Almost every nation has had a tradition of a deluge, and of the preservation of a single family from the desolating waters. Humboldt mentions such a tradition as existing among the ignorant native tribes in South America, and says: “These ancient traditions of the human race, which are dispersed over the globe, like the fragments of a vast shipwreck, are of the greatest interest in the philosophical study of our species. Like certain families of plants, which, notwithstanding the diversity of climates and influence of heights, retain the impress of a *common type*, so the traditions respecting the primitive state of the globe present among all nations a resemblance that fills us with astonishment. The substance of the traditions respecting the destroyed races and the renovation of nature is everywhere

almost the same, although each nation gives it a different coloring." These traditions point us to the deluge recorded in the Scriptures, and go to show that all the existing races of men are the descendants of Noah. Tradition and history also represent all the races of men as originating in central Asia; from which fact it is fair to infer that they all belong to the same family and may claim the same ancestry.

Another argument for the unity of the human race is derived from the similarity which exists between the *languages* of all the nations of the earth. Mankind at first, if they constitute one race or family, must have spoken one language, which might indeed have become wholly lost in the lapse of ages, but of which it is reasonable to expect to find some traces in the varying languages of men. The resemblances of languages, as really as the identity of traditions, prove the unity of the race: they are so numerous, and of such a nature, and exist so universally and among nations so entirely separated from each other, that they cannot be accounted for on any other hypothesis than that of one language spoken by all mankind. Races differing from each other in their origin would differ from each other entirely as to the structure of their languages and as to the words they employ, excepting at least those words which bear a resemblance to sounds in nature; for the structure of language and the use of words are entirely artificial and arbitrary. Philology has been used successfully as a means of discovering to a degree the history of nations,—at least of showing between what nations close affinities have existed in obscure ages; nor is it strange that it has been successfully used in tracing all mankind to a common origin. Klaproth, who is said to entertain no especial reverence for the Divine oracles, thus expresses himself: "The universal affinity of language is placed in so strong a light that it must be considered by all as completely demonstrated. This appears inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that of admitting fragments of a

primary language to exist through all the languages of the old and new world." The opinion just recited has been held by Herder, Schlegel, Humboldt, and nearly all the most distinguished linguists of the day; and we may claim, for reasons just given, this unity of language as a proof of the unity of the race.

Another argument which has been adduced to prove that all mankind belong to the same species is derived from the fact that hybrids, or the progeny of different species, do not propagate. The law according to which different species are forbidden to amalgamate is illustrative of the wisdom of the Creator, inasmuch as it prevents the confounding of all the existing species of animals: without its operation, new races of animals would be multiplied interminably, the old ones would cease to exist, specific distinctions would be entirely lost sight of, and the world would become filled with beings the most misshapen and monstrous. Of the existence of hybrids there is no doubt, but nothing could be better established than the fact that they are usually barren; and not only do they rarely, if ever, propagate, but their progeny, if they have any, speedily die out. Now, nothing is better known than the fact that the various races of mankind have intermingled and produced new permanent races: the progeny of the amalgamated human races are prolific, not sterile: some have supposed that the mixture of two of the human races produces in general even a hardier, healthier, and more active race. We conclude from the fertility of the mixed races that they belong to the same species, or have a common origin. It has been said, indeed, that the mulatto—the progeny of the white and negro races—is not healthy or long-lived, and would not long continue to propagate. It is true, probably, that he cannot endure cold so well as his white ancestor, or heat so well as his negro progenitor; but he is usually as healthy and long-lived as either the white or the black man: placed in a climate suitable to them,

mulattoes would, doubtless, propagate and be prolific to the end of time.

The points of resemblance between the various races of mankind are so striking and numerous as to convince us that they all belong to the same species and are descended from the same pair. Their physiology proves the identity of their origin; for they have the same physical structure and the same vital organs: their pathology proves it; for they are subject to the same diseases. They are all alike in standing erect; in having the same number of arms and legs, hands and feet, fingers and toes, eyes and ears; in having the same number of bones and muscles, the same number of, and similar, digestive organs; as to the time and manner of bringing forth and nourishing their young; in using all kinds of food and in cooking what they eat; in their power of adapting themselves to all climates; in their use of articulate speech, which distinguishes them from the brute creation. All men resemble each other in their intellectual faculties, although these faculties are cultivated to different degrees among different nations; all of them have the perceptive faculties, the faculty of suggestion, memory, imagination, the power of association of ideas, and (what distinguishes them from inferior animals) the power of abstraction. All men resemble each other in their moral emotions and in their moral character. The capacity of human beings for education and progress, which is universal, distinguishes them from all other animals, and constitutes a proof of the identity of their origin. All men are sinners. The depravity of mankind is known to be universal. It is unreasonable to suppose that the Deity created man a depraved being, and especially is it unreasonable to suppose that He went on creating a number of depraved races. Man is not now what he was when he proceeded from the hand of his Maker: he is a fallen being. Can we suppose that all these different races, undergoing different probations, have all fallen? Or can we

suppose that the father of one race has undergone a moral probation for all the other races? No; this universal depravity points us to Adam, the federal man and the first transgressor, as the father of all mankind; it proves the unity of the human race. All men are alike also in possessing an instinctive belief in immortality. Man is everywhere a religious being; no race or nation has existed without religious worship. If sameness of species and identity of origin can be proved by any number of existing points of resemblance, then it is proved that all mankind are of the same species and origin.

It has been objected to the doctrine of the unity of the race, that so many differences and dissimilarities exist among the various races of mankind that it is unreasonable to suppose that they are all the descendants of a single pair. The objection just stated has been urged by several men of no small distinction in the scientific world; but it has been fully met. It has been well ascertained that great varieties may arise among individuals of the same species of animals, and that these varieties may be propagated and become permanent. The same law prevails also in the vegetable world. The reason of this law, so far especially as animals are concerned, seems to be that they may become adapted to different localities and different modes of life. Its operation is to produce an agreeable diversity among living things, without that confusion which would result from a commingling of different species. Reasoning from the law just stated, we may conclude that permanent varieties are to be expected to be found in the human species; and that, if the differences found among races of men are not greater than are found among inferior animals of the same species, these different races of men may be of the same species. It is asserted by the ablest men of science that the varieties that have arisen among lower animals of the same species are as marked and fixed as those which appear among mankind. We do not pre-

tend to have made an independent investigation of this subject, but we presume that the facts which we shall quote are established beyond all dispute. It is known that all the varieties of the dog belong to the same species; that all the varieties of the swine have the same origin; that all the varieties of the ox are traceable to a common parentage. The same may be said of the varieties of the sheep. Varieties of animals from the same stock may be produced within a few hundred years, and often in a much shorter time. Climates, countries, custom, and education are known to exert a powerful influence on both the bodies and the intellects of men; it is also probable that, at an early period of the world, the deteriorating influences which operated on man were more powerful than any which have since existed. It has been said that it is impossible that the white man and the negro should be of the same species. Yet the Hindoo, who, as ethnologists inform us, belongs to the Indo-Germanic race, or is of the same race with the Briton, is often almost as black as the negro. It has been said that history allows too short a time for the degradation of the white man into the negro; that the monuments and records of Egypt show us that the negro has existed, as he is now, as far back as within eight hundred years of the flood. The wisest men have refused their confidence to the testimony of the Egyptian records on the subject in question. Admitting its accuracy, and adopting the chronology of the Septuagint or Hales, a thousand years (quite time enough) is allowed for the effecting of the negro's degradation.

A distinguished scientific man has advanced the theory "that races of men originated, as did plants and other animals, where they are found." In opposition to this theory it has been said that it cannot be proved that the lower animals were created where they now exist, but that the contrary can be shown with regard to most of them; most of the domestic animals certainly came from Asia; that

even if other animals did originate where they exist, it does not necessarily follow that man so originated, since he has reason given him, to direct him where to locate himself; that it is proved from history that mankind generally did not originate where they now exist; that their residence does not correspond with that of the flora and fauna, according to the theory; and that this theory makes the number of human races indefinite and almost innumerable.

We have shown, we trust, that the Scriptures do not conflict with the teachings of human science in the cases alleged; they do so in no case; and the fact that, while they speak so plainly and frequently of natural things, they contain no scientific errors, furnishes a very persuasive argument for their inspiration. In this respect they contrast strikingly with all other books professing to be inspired. "In the religious books of the Hindoos," Gaussen says, "we are told that the moon is fifty thousand leagues higher than the sun, that it shines by its own light, and animates our body; that our earth is triangular and flat, composed of seven stories,—the first of honey, the second of sugar, the third of butter, the fourth of wine; and that all this mass is carried on the heads of innumerable elephants, which, in shaking themselves, cause the earth to tremble." The Koran of Mahomet represents mountains as made to keep the earth from being moved, and the earth as held by anchors. Almost every distinguished writer of antiquity has written some scientific absurdity, which would disprove its justness if he had made a claim to inspiration. The same may be said also of almost all the early writers of the Christian church. Why do you find in the books of the Bible no such scientific errors? The answer is, because they are inspired. The inspired writers were not, necessarily, scientific men; they were certainly unacquainted with many of the discoveries of modern science; yet they have written as though they were acquainted with scientific truths unknown to their contemporaries,—as, for

example, when they allude to the form of the earth as globular, and to air as having weight. This coincidence of scriptural expression with recently discovered scientific truth furnishes proof of the inspiration of the Bible.

Note to Chapter XIX.—It is said that, within the last few years, fossil skeletons of human beings, and implements of human industry or use, have been found in post-tertiary formations, so as to lead to the conclusion that the origin of the human race must be dated back to a period long anterior to that which Moses assigns as the period of its nativity. It is stated that Sir Charles Lyell has expressed the opinion that the deposits just alluded to were, probably, made one hundred thousand years ago, and, consequently, prove that the human race has, probably, existed during all that time. Granting that these fossil remains have been fully ascertained to be human, the question arises, whether the discovery of them, instead of proving the greater antiquity of the race, does not prove a more recent origin of the post-tertiary formation, in which they are found, than has been commonly ascribed to it by geologists. Geology is not so firmly established as a science that none of its conclusions may be overthrown; and the Scriptures may, in certain circumstances, well be permitted to modify some of its theories. Is it not a possible solution of the difficulty suggested, that the human fossils may have become, by some external force, imbedded in the post-tertiary formation after the time of the first deposition? This question we must, however, with due humility, submit to geologists themselves. We confidently say that it is wholly improbable that one hundred thousand years have elapsed since the creation of man. If man had existed so long on the earth, it is probable that not a few, but many, fossil remains of him would have been found in the geological formations. Besides, in that case, it is probable that many works of human art would have survived on the earth's surface, as monuments of the great antiquity of the race.

In regard to scientific objections to Christianity, we may say that some of them, which once seemed to have great force, have been, in the course of time, entirely removed; those, for example, which were drawn from the astronomy of the Egyptians and Hindoos. As physical science is constantly varying, constantly forming new hypotheses and making new experiments and discoveries, we must expect it to be ever presenting new apparent objections to the Christian religion. What shall we do with these new objections before

they can be satisfactorily removed? Shall we permit them to overthrow our faith in the best of religions, sustained as it is by the best of evidence? No! we must wait for these objections to be removed, as they will be, in the course of time, by further experiments and discoveries, as similar objections have so often been. After all plausible objections to Christianity had been removed by the progress of science, a new scientific objection to our religion has arisen, viz., that which we have just considered. And what does the history of scientific objections teach us with respect to this objection? Surely it teaches us to investigate the subject further and more closely, waiting patiently until God, in his providence, shall give us a solution of our difficulty; for the present, this new geological objection against Christianity ought not to have a feather's weight.

Having affirmed that there is no monumental evidence of a greater antiquity of the human race than that taught in Genesis, we would remind the reader that a great amount of monumental evidence of the truth of the Scriptures does exist. How great the number of scriptural facts which have been confirmed by the hieroglyphics of Egypt and the remains of Nineveh, alone! A volume in which shall be grouped together all the monumental evidence for our religion is a desideratum in literature.

Within the last hundred and fifty years, great efforts have been made to establish what may be styled "the transmutation hypothesis," the tendency of which is to destroy a belief in the existence of God and in the immortality of the human soul. That hypothesis has not yet been established. In 1748 an interesting book was published on this subject, written by De Maillet, a contemporary of Newton and Leibnitz. Huxley admits that the treatise has no great value in the light of modern science, and it is now generally neglected. Lamarck adopted and advocated, in his "*Philosophie Zoologique*," the transmutation hypothesis. His views were, however, resisted by the vast authority of Cuvier, and sank into general contempt. The "*Vestiges of Creation*," which was exceedingly popular for a time, and in which the effort was made to establish the theory of development, has been with unanimity condemned by the scientific. Darwin has recently startled the world by his "*Origin of Species*" and "*Descent of Man*." It is not likely that his efforts will produce an impression more permanent than that produced by his predecessors in the same line. According to Darwin, all species have been produced by the development of varieties and permanent races through the process of natural selection. A full description or refutation of the Darwinian theory is not to be expected here. It has been thoroughly examined by many whose writings are accessible

to the reader. Professor Huxley, who has been claimed as a disciple of Darwin, and who is certainly competent to give an opinion as to what he has accomplished, published these words in 1871 :—

“After much consideration, and *with assuredly no bias* against Mr. Darwin's views, it is our clear conviction that, as the evidence now stands, it is not absolutely proven that a group of animals, having all the characters exhibited by species in nature, has ever been originated by selection, whether artificial or natural. Groups having the morphological character of species, distinct and permanent races in fact, have been so produced over and over again ; but there is no positive evidence, at present, that any group of animals has, by variation or selective breeding, given rise to another group which was *even in the least degree infertile with the first*. Mr. Darwin is perfectly aware of this weak point, and brings forward a multitude of ingenious and important arguments to diminish the force of this objection. We admit the value of these arguments to their fullest extent ; nay, we will go so far as to express our belief that experiments, conducted by skillful physiologists, would very probably obtain the desired production of mutually more or less infertile breeds from a common stock, in a comparatively few years ; but still, as the case stands at present, this little rift within the lute is not to be disguised or overlooked.”

It appears, then, that thus far Darwin has not proved the transmutation of a species into a genus, or the transmutation of one genus into another (we mean by genus a class of animals that will not permanently amalgamate with another) ; consequently we are not compelled by him to believe that the gorilla has been transmuted into man. This distinguished man may, after all, only subserve the cause of Christianity, by accounting for the varieties which we discover among the different families of mankind, in consistence with the unity of the race. Whatever transmutations may have occurred, there is no difficulty in supposing that the production of man, a spiritual and immortal being, the first on the earth, may have been miraculous, or by the direct intervention of Divine power, as was that of the matter of which the earth is formed.

Although there may be some element of truth in the Darwinian hypothesis, as a whole it seems to us as unreasonable (and we believe it will ever seem as unreasonable to the mass of men) as the doctrine of Epicurus, that “the universe has been formed by a fortuitous concourse of atoms,” or the doctrine that everything has been made by chance. If nature is always trying to exceed her former performances, or at least trying everything, she may at last try to make something greater than the loftiest archangel. She may try to

make a God, and succeed in the effort. She certainly, according to Darwin, has Divine purposes, although her frequent failures have proved that she has not quite Divine power.

To all the atheistic and materialistic conclusions which some men have attempted to draw from zoology, biology, and physiology, we oppose our *intuitions*. These cannot be successfully reasoned against, and nothing can tear them from our breast. We *feel* that there is something within us which has at least a degree of control over everything that is material; we feel that we are moral agents, and know that we have a moral law written on our hearts; we feel the immortality that is within us. Our consciousness, as well as our observation of mankind, assures us that religion is a natural element in the human soul. It has been said, indeed, in opposition to the idea of a religious instinct or intuition, that there are nations which have no gods and no religious worship. We question the fact; but if we admit it, we may account for it by supposing that sin has sunk the human mind into a state of torpidity in which it is incapable of apprehending even the primary truths of our nature. To deny the existence of the religious instinct in man (which is one of the proofs of the Divine existence), when it has been proved by all human experience from the earliest period of human history, seems to be consummate folly. As well might you deny the existence of all the active powers of man's nature, not one of which has acted with greater power or uniformity than this. It is found in men in their lowest barbarism; it clings to them amid their most advanced civilization. The positivist affirms that superstition marks the earlier eras of the world, and that the science of advanced ages supplants or excludes it; but if science when matured shall not lead to God (and assuredly it will, for to discover the laws of nature must lead to the further discovery of Him who sits behind, presides over, and directs them all), it can never destroy the instincts of man's original nature. Imbedded deeply in the human soul is the instinct of religion. The great Author of our being has as certainly implanted it in every human bosom, as He has implanted there those parental and filial affections which are necessary to the formation of human families, or that resentment of extreme oppression or usurpation which is necessary to the preservation and purity of civil laws and government. Like these, indeed, it may lie dormant; ignorance and sin may pervert it; it may burst out in the fires of fanaticism, or it may sport itself in the vagaries of superstition; but all the objects of sense cannot wholly suppress it, and sin itself cannot wholly extinguish it. It indicates man's primal condition before sin had blighted him, shows that his nature is spiritual, points out the chief end of his existence,

and proclaims the immortality of the destiny of the race. We recommend to our reader to study Beattie's "Essay on Truth." It has been regarded by some as a superficial performance; but we know no book which has more completely refuted the atheism and skepticism of Hume. He has applied the principles of *common sense* as successfully to the subject of theology as Reid has applied them to the subject of perception. Let us here say that the opinion of Sir William Hamilton has deservedly great weight. He says: "Though the argument from common sense be an appeal to the natural convictions of mankind, it is not an appeal from philosophy to blind feeling. It is only an appeal from the heretical conclusions of particular philosophies to the catholic principles of all philosophy."

CHAPTER XX.

THE ASTRONOMICAL OBJECTION TO CHRISTIANITY.

INFIDELS have endeavored to bring the sublime science of astronomy into an attitude of hostility to the Christian religion, to make "the stars in their courses fight against" it. An argument against redemption has been drawn from the magnitude of the universe. It is generally believed that the planets that revolve round our sun, and the sun itself, are inhabited by rational and responsible beings,—that each of the stars that are visible to us is so inhabited, and is a sun, round which roll planets like our world, which are also inhabited by an intelligent population; and it is asked by the skeptic whether it is reasonable to suppose that God has given so much attention to our little earth as the Scriptures represent, and given his only Son for the salvation of man. The celebrated Thomas Paine, in the "Age of Reason," presents the following argument: "Though it is not a direct article of the Christian system that this world which we inhabit is the whole of the habitable creation, yet it is so worked up therewith from what is called the Mosaic account of the creation, the story of

Eve and the apple, and the counterpart of that story,—the death of the Son of God,—that to believe otherwise, that is, to believe that God created a plurality of worlds, at least as numerous as what we call stars, renders the Christian system of faith at once little and ridiculous, and scatters it in the mind like feathers in the air. The two beliefs cannot be held together in the same mind; and he who thinks he believes both has thought but little of either.” The objection just stated has had weight with many uncultivated minds and with some men of science, and perhaps has as much real force as most of the objections which have been preferred against revelation.

As to the vast magnitude of the physical universe there is no question; but there is doubt as to what number of rational and moral inhabitants is contained in the shining worlds. There are many scientific men who believe that our earth is the only world inhabited by intelligent creatures like man. Among these may be named Whewell, the author of a work called “*The Plurality of Worlds*,” in which are displayed great taste, genius, and knowledge of astronomy. This writer takes the position that our sun is the largest of the suns, and our world the most solid of the planets. He regards the other planets as probably in the condition in which the earth was during the geological periods before the creation of man; and, while he believes that they are not inhabited by rational beings like man, he does not deny that they may be occupied by inferior creatures like the residents on the pre-Adamic earth. He considers “the earth the domestic hearth of the solar system; adjusted between the hot and fiery haze on one side, and the cold and watery vapor on the other; the only fit region to be a domestic hearth, a seat of habitation.” “What then,” says he, “is the peculiar physical condition which we are led to ascribe to the earth? Plainly this: that she is situated just in that region of the system where the existence of matter, both in a solid, a gaseous, and a fluid

condition, is possible." "The earth then, it would seem, is the abode of life, not because all the globes which revolve round the sun may be assumed to be the abodes of life, but because the earth is fitted to be so by a curious and complex combination of properties and relations which do not at all apply to the others. That the earth is inhabited is not a reason for believing that the other planets are so, but for believing that they are not so." Whewell asserts that there is no analogy between our sun and other stars,—at least no such analogy as would prove that they have attendant planets. The suns themselves he regards as too fiery to be the abodes of such beings as men. From the spiral motion of the *nebulæ* or nebular stars, he infers that they have no planets. Of the fixed stars generally he says: "That the stars are independent luminaries, we see; but whether they are as dense as the sun, or globes a hundred or a thousand times as rare, we have no means whatever of knowing. And to assume that, besides these luminous bodies which we see, there are dark bodies which we do not see, revolving round the others in permanent orbits, which require special mechanical conditions; and to suppose this in order that we may build on this assumption a still larger one, that of living inhabitants of these dark bodies, is a hypothetical procedure which it seems strange we should have to combat, at the present stage of the history of science, and in dealing with those whose minds have been disciplined by the previous events in the progress of astronomy." This writer adduces many reasons for believing that no planets roll around the fixed stars. "It will perhaps be said," says the author of "The Plurality of Worlds," "that to suppose the whole solar system to be a machine merely operating for the benefit of the earth and its inhabitants, is to give to the earth and its population an importance in the scheme of creation which is quite extravagant and improbable:—it is to make the greater orbs, Jupiter and Saturn, minister to the less,

instead of having their own purpose and their own population, which their size naturally leads us to expect. To this we reply that, in the first place, we have shown good reason for believing that the earth is really the largest dense solid globe which exists in the solar system, and that the size of Jupiter and Saturn arises from their being composed mainly of vapor and water. And with regard to the difficulty of the greater ministering to the less; if by 'greater' mere size and extent be understood, it appears to be the law of creation that the greater, in that sense, should minister to the less, when the less includes living things." To the objection that his theory makes nature work in vain, the writer replies: "To work in vain, in the sense of producing means of life which are not used, embryos which are never vivified, germs which are not developed, is so far from being contrary to the usual proceedings of nature that it is an operation which is constantly going on in nature." "It is quite agreeable to analogy that the solar system, of which the *flowers* are many, should have borne one *fertile* flower. Even if any number of the fixed stars were also found to be barren flowers of the sky, objects however beautiful, yet not sources of life or development, we need not think the powers of creation wasted or frustrated, thrown away or perverted. One such fertile result as the earth, with all its hosts of plants and animals, and especially with man, an intelligent being, to stand at the head of those hosts, is a worthy and sufficient produce, so far as we can judge of the Creator's ways by analogy, of all the universal scheme."

If the theory just presented be admitted, the astronomical objection to redemption is at once removed. The magnitude of the physical universe, even if it is inhabited by irrational animals, presents no argument against revelation; and, if Whewell's theory be true, the moral universe is not large, or rather, human beings, in their many succeeding generations, constitute a very large proportion of the

rational creation. Let us suppose that there are in the universe only three orders of moral beings,—angels, lost spirits, and men; the first of which are holy and happy, needing no redemption, though perhaps confirmed infallibly in holiness by that new exhibition of truth which is made at the cross; the second of which orders of moral beings are, by the necessary operation of Divine law, hopelessly lost; and that man, who constitutes the third order, is in a condition to be recovered from his apostasy and restored to the happiness he has forfeited: it is not strange, or at least it is not incredible, that the Almighty should employ all his moral resources for the recovery of this third order of moral beings to holiness and happiness. Certainly, on the supposition just given, it cannot be affirmed that the vastness of the universe furnishes any objection to the scheme of human redemption.

It is probable that there are many other worlds besides the earth inhabited by rational beings. Millions of stars have already been discovered; and doubtless, beyond the remotest star that has ever become visible to man, other millions of stars have an existence. Beyond the reach of the most powerful telescope there are, probably, other firmaments glowing with worlds, and as expanded as that which hangs over man. That the suns and planets, which throng immensity, are inhabited by moral and intelligent creatures, is an opinion which many of the wisest philosophers and theologians have adopted. Sir David Brewster, in his work called "*More Worlds than One*," has said: "Giordano Bruno of Nola, Kepler, and Tycho believed in it; and Cardinal Cusa and Bruno, before the discovery of binary systems among the stars, believed also that the stars were inhabited. In more modern times Dr. Bentley, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, in his eighth sermon on the confutation of atheism from the origin and frame of the world, has maintained the same doctrine; and in our own day we may number among its supporters the distin-

guished names of Sir John Herschel, Dr. Chalmers, Isaac Taylor, and M. Arago." Brewster himself believed in a plurality of worlds of rational beings, and on such a subject he is certainly no mean authority. In his opinion there is "neither in the Old nor the New Testament a single expression incompatible with the great truth that there exist other worlds than our own which are the seats of life and intelligence." He thinks that "many passages, on the contrary, are favorable to the doctrine, and that some are inexplicable without admitting it to be true." From known analogies between our earth and other planets, he infers that they, as well as it, are inhabited. In the same way he infers that the moon and suns are inhabited. By a course of analogical reasoning, he comes to the conclusion that other solar systems are the dwelling-places of rational beings. He supposes that the beings who dwell on more magnificent planets may be far superior to the human race, possessing a type of reason of which the intellect of Newton is the lowest degree. We are not willing to deny the truth of anything which so enlarges our conceptions of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator as the doctrine of a plurality of worlds. It is probable, however, that some of the worlds may have no living tenants, and that some of them are inhabited only by irrational creatures and becoming prepared for a moral population, while others of them are already the homes of intelligent beings. We do not object to that theory which gives to the worlds the largest populations; for the larger the moral universe, the greater the reason seems to be that God should illustrate his goodness in the salvation of a fallen world; because the greater the number of those who need and are profited by, who appreciate and admire, the work of saving beneficence.

It is known to every one that Dr. Chalmers has, in a series of discourses, considered and refuted the astronomical objection. Some, indeed, have said that the argument of the great Scotch preacher is not conclusive;

but it is as satisfactory as it is eloquently expressed, and leaves little or nothing to be added on the great theme.

Let us call to mind, before proceeding to the particular subject before us, that those views of the magnitude of the universe which astronomy affords have never been considered as affecting the doctrines of natural religion : they certainly do not bring into question the existence and the infinite power of God ; nor do they throw any doubt on his omnipresence and omniscience and unceasing vigilance over every part of his universe,—his universal providence. We see no reason, therefore, why they should bring into discredit the fact of revelation, if it can be shown that a revelation is necessary to man, and if evidence of its having been given has been furnished. God's providence is as easily exercised over many worlds as over one world ; a revelation to man is not in itself impossible ; and we have no means of knowing whether verbal or written revelations have not been made by the Almighty to all worlds. The objection drawn from astronomy is, however, brought not against providence or the fact of a revelation, but against redemption,—against the incarnation of Deity in this world.

The magnitude of the moral universe furnishes no argument against redemption, because we have no reason to believe that sin has ever entered any other world that astronomy and our senses reveal to us, except this which is the residence of man. No man can prove that the inhabitants of any other planet or any sun have sinned ; and we are not to believe without positive proof that so monstrous a thing as sin has been permitted in any other part of the universe. We know indeed that a portion of the angels have fallen ; but we do not know that they reside in any of the material worlds or have any local habitation ; and, admitting that they have, their moral condition is hopeless and their redemption impossible. Why lost spirits can have no redemption we are unable to tell : only this we can say on that subject,—for reasons unknown

to us, their salvation is inconsistent with the attributes and purposes of God. If man be the only being who is fallen and capable of salvation, it is not incredible that God should take vast pains to save him, however great the number of the holy of the universe, so great an evil is sin, so destructive is it to all the interests of immortal spirits. The salvation of myriads of immortal beings, such as receive the benefits of the gospel on earth, is an achievement not unworthy the God of the universe, if it can be effected without a compromise of his character, even though the number of the saved should bear a small proportion to that of the unsinning subjects of the eternal empire. Had all the inhabitants of all worlds, except one solitary immortal being, remained in a condition of moral purity, we cannot perceive that God's wisdom could have been impeached,—on the contrary, we believe that the Divine attributes would have been glorified,—by the use of all available means for the redemption and recovery of that single soul. While we admit the vast extent of the regions of space over which is spread a moral population, we cherish the opinion that sin is confined to one planet (excepting the residence of fallen angels), and that the inhabitants of the worlds that shine above us are as pure as the light that flows from their own blessed habitations: this opinion, which no one can prove to be ill founded, corresponds with all our conceptions of the benevolence of the Deity.

The magnitude of the universe furnishes no argument against redemption, because, even if many other worlds have rolled from their moral orbits, it may be that the human race is the only race of rational beings that is in a condition which admits of its redemption. Fallen angels have certainly been placed beyond the reach of Divine mercy; and there may be something in the character of the sinners of other worlds, if any such exist, or in the manner in which they have had their probation, which excludes them from heavenly grace. If this be the only

race which, whatever may be the reason, is capable of redemption, it is not incredible that the Deity should become incarnate to effect its salvation, if it be credible that He would so humble Himself for any purpose whatever.

The vastness of the universe cannot be considered as presenting a just objection to redemption, if it is remembered that this world, insignificant as it may seem to be, is large enough for that display of the Divine attributes which has been made at the cross, and to make which was the chief design of the plan of salvation. The chief end of redemption, as of creation and providence, was, as it ought to have been, not the salvation of the human race, but the glory of the great Creator; to that all things in heaven and earth are subordinate and subservient. Reason and revelation alike teach us that God is expressing his character through his works and deeds, so as to make it intelligible to the rational creatures whom He has made for the purpose of surveying and rejoicing in it, and so as to derive pleasure Himself from the wonderful delineation. A holy and happy universe seems not to have been sufficient to express the whole of the Divine character. Although the infinite power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth had all been known to the angels from the period of their creation, one attribute of Deity, not less beautiful or glorious than the other Divine perfections,—viz., that of mercy,—had never become known to intelligent creatures until the creation and the fall of man. We cannot imagine that the Deity would everywhere furnish immediate and palpable proof of his mercy, because the direct display of it in any world implies the existence there of sin and suffering; and it is enough that one world has afforded an occasion for the disclosure of it; nor is it a matter of importance how small that world is, if the facts which reveal the attribute become known in other portions of the universe. Chalmers, referring to redemption, says: "The

essential character of such a transaction, viewed as a manifestation of God, does not hang upon the number of worlds over which this sin and this salvation may have extended. We know that over this one world such an economy of wisdom and mercy is instituted, and, even though this be the only world that is embraced by it, the moral display of the Godhead is mainly and substantially the same as if it reached throughout the whole of that habitable extent which the science of astronomy has made known to us. The extent of the field upon which this question was decided has no more influence on the question itself than the figure or dimensions of that field of battle on which some great political question was fought has on the importance or on the moral principles of the controversy which gave rise to it. This objection, about the narrowness of the theatre, carries along with it all the grossness of materialism. To the eye of spiritual and intelligent beings it is nothing. In their view, the redemption of a sinful world derives its chief interest from the display it gives of the mind and purposes of the Deity; and should that world be but a single speck in the immensity of the works of God, the only way in which this affects their estimate of Him is to magnify his loving-kindness, who, rather than lose one solitary world of the myriads He has formed, would lavish all the riches of his beneficence and of his wisdom on the recovery of its guilty population." Revelation informs us that other beings than men have a knowledge of redemption; that the angels desire to look into it; that it is the object at once of their study and delight; from it they derive new views of the character of God, which win from them new praises to the infinite Father, such as all they had known before of the Divine creation and providence had not induced them to offer. It is *reasonable*, too, to believe in the existence of angels, and that redemption has been made known to them. We do not know which sun or planet the angels inhabit, or whether

they inhabit any. It may be that they have their habitations in the stars; and whether they have or not, it is reasonable to think that, since God has made known redemption to them, He has also made it known to the dwellers in other worlds, if indeed other worlds have an intelligent population. It is probable that a knowledge of redemption, the greatest event of the universe, has been diffused among all the worlds that science has disclosed to us. To this idea John Foster has objected, on the ground that "it plainly gives a loftier idea of the Divine Being, that He should do such great things in all the worlds of his dominion, than that He should do them only in a few instances, or only in one, and that He should do them in an endless diversity of form and mode, than in one only." We reply, that redemption is God's greatest work, that it can have no parallel, and that we cannot conceive of its ever being repeated. Nothing can so proclaim the Divine attributes as the scheme of salvation; and to the effectuation of that the death of the Son of God was necessary. Shall the Son of God die in other worlds? We cannot believe, and the Scriptures give us no right to suppose, that God ever has, or ever will, perform so great a work, in any of the worlds of his dominion, as the work of redemption; and that work must be made known to the inhabitants of other worlds, or they must be ignorant of the existence of the attribute of the Divine mercy, or at least ignorant of the mode of its reconciliation with the Divine justice. God may be as much glorified by redemption as though the theatre of its exhibition had been the greatest of the worlds, or as though the atoning sufferings of the Redeemer were repeated in other worlds, if the story of the cross is told, as we may well suppose it is, in every part of the habitable universe. If the existence of sin has been necessary to the display of the Divine attribute of mercy, o object to the smallness of this world as a theatre of redemption is to object that sin, whose existence at all

is profoundly mysterious to us, has not invaded a larger portion of the Divine dominions.

As the moral influence of redemption may be, and probably has been, extended to all the inhabited worlds, it makes little difference whether the world which is the theatre of it be of greater or less dimensions. We do not for a moment believe that the atonement of Christ has been made for the inhabitants of any world besides our own, even if other worlds have fallen; for Christ has manifestly died only to remove the guilt of that nature of which He partook, and it was necessary that He should partake of the nature which He redeemed. Nor do we believe that the work of Christ on earth has, as some suppose, been the meritorious cause of the confirmation of the angels in their celestial privileges. The angels in heaven are, doubtless, established securely; they are elect, and can never fall; but the probability is that they have reached their present safe estate by standing a successful moral probation for themselves. Still, the moral lessons which are learned from the cross may have had, and may continue to have, a wide and powerful influence on the inhabitants of other worlds. The new views of the character of God, which the angels derive from redemption, doubtless serve to expand their intellectual natures and kindle the fervors of their pious devotion; nor are we to consider as a thing of no importance the progress of those exalted beings who worship immediately before the Divine throne. Besides the angels, there may be holy inhabitants of other worlds, and these may not yet have completed their probation; and on them the exhibition which the atonement makes of the Divine attributes, of the sanctity of the law, and the evil of sin, may exert an influence to deter them from apostasy and to elevate and expand their moral being. The love manifested in the cross of Christ, which has rendered the Deity so attractive to sinful men, and which is sufficient even to reclaim the wandering, may

well be imagined to be sufficient to defend the already holy from all temptation to disobedience. And, besides this influence on holy beings that now exist in other worlds, many of the worlds around us, which may be now in the condition in which this world was during the long geological periods, may become filled with rational inhabitants, who during the period of their moral probation may be deterred from sin and sustained in holiness by the influence of that truth which shall reach them from the cross. It will be easily seen that the degree of the moral influence of redemption on the inhabitants of other worlds does not depend on the size of the world in which it has been effected. The light of redemption, from whatever quarter of the universe, and from however obscure and remote a planet it may proceed, casts a brilliant illumination on all worlds. It is not improbable that redemption, as a moral deed, may be rendered more conspicuous by being contrasted with the narrowness of the physical arena on which it has been achieved.

It becomes the astronomical objector to consider that any place chosen as the scene of the redemptive act must be, necessarily, small in comparison with the rest of the universe. A propitiatory offering to Divine justice is of necessity made (if made at all) in some particular world. Now each of the worlds is small in comparison with the rest of the physical creation. It may be that only planets are inhabited, and that our planet had a greater magnitude than a majority of the planets of all space. Suppose Jupiter, a larger planet, had been selected as the theatre of redemption; the astronomical objection would have weighed as heavily as it does now. Suppose one of the suns to be chosen as the arena on which to display the mercy of God; that sun, whatever it may be, is small in comparison with the rest of the universe; and the astronomical objection remains in all its force. So that we find this objection extends to any redemption wherever performed. Shall we

suppose that God is debarred from his grandest work because his creation is large, and suns and planets are numerous, so that each of them is small in comparison with the universe? It was necessary, if God would effect redemption at all, either that He should choose some narrow field for the act, or that He should be repeating the awful sacrifice of his Son from world to world. From the thought of the latter alternative every devout mind instinctively shrinks, and we all rejoice to think that a thing so glorious as redemption has been possible.

Perhaps the objector may still urge that his difficulty would have been less if the sun or Jupiter had been chosen as the arena of redemption. We reply that we can see no reason for giving a preference to either of those worlds. According to the theory of some who claim to be theologians, moral agents are necessarily liable to sin, and even infinite power cannot infallibly secure them in holiness without violence to the freedom of their wills. This theory we regard as false and pernicious; but if it be received as true, it is evident that God could not choose the world in which to achieve redemption, because He could not choose which of the worlds should be invaded by sin; and He necessarily, if He would make an atonement at all, made it for the race that chose to fall, without regard to the magnitude of the world on which it resided. The supralapsarian theory is that God determined first in the order of nature that Divine grace should be displayed in the restoration of a fallen race, and then determined to create man and permit him to fall. Even according to that theory the Divine wisdom and benevolence are displayed in the choice of some small portion of the universe as the scene of the apostasy and recovery. According to the sublapsarian theory, which has been adopted by the most judicious theologians, God determined to create man, and, for reasons inscrutable to us, to permit him to sin, and then, prospectively seeing his fall, determined to provide for him a re-

demption. Even according to this latter theory we see the wisdom and goodness of God in permitting sin to enter only a small portion of his dominions, and seizing on that, however inconsiderable, as the place for his redemptive work. Why did He not choose a smaller world for the wondrous exhibition? We cannot answer that question. God only knows how many redeemed spirits He needs to fill up the vacancies that have been caused by the apostasy of the angels.

We wonder why we happen to reside in the world in which the great atonement was effected. We may wonder why we reside in a world which sin has invaded; but our wonder does not disprove the existence of sin. We may wonder that we live in the present age instead of our being reserved for some future or our having lived in some past era; but our astonishment on this subject does not disprove the fact of our present existence. We may wonder that life was ever, or was ever to be, our destiny; but our meditation about life does not prevent us from knowing that we live. So our amazement that we reside in the redeemed world does not disprove the fact of redemption. Redemption, like existence and sin, whenever or wherever it has occurred, must seem wonderful.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LIMITED INFLUENCE OF REDEMPTION IN THE WORLD CONSIDERED AS AN OBJECTION TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THE limited influence of redemption in the world has been regarded as furnishing an objection to its Divine origin. It is not enough to satisfy the objector that Christianity is the purest of all religions and has produced the most exalted virtues ever known on earth. He still contends that a reli-

gion which pretends to have come from God and to be accompanied with Divine power ought to be embraced more generally by those to whom it has been made known; that it ought to exert a more decided influence on those who profess submission to it; that it ought to have become known to all nations; and that it ought long ago to have brought the whole world under its dominion. A wide and interesting field of discussion is opened by the objection, or rather the objections, just stated.

To the objection that a greater number of persons in Christian lands ought to have embraced the Christian religion if it be true, it is not difficult to reply. The reason why many reject the gospel is not because it is false, but because it is true; not because it is of human origin, but because it is Divine. Christianity ought not to be held responsible for that which is to be ascribed to the depravity of man. Men embrace the gospel in the exercise of their affections and understandings, and to compel all men to receive it would seem to be, on the part of God, an interference with the moral agency of human beings. If we grant that God might have induced all men in Christian lands to become Christians, it must also be admitted that He was under no obligation to do so. It was sufficient for Him to give to all men the proffer of salvation; and He may have the wisest purposes to accomplish in permitting many to reject the proffered grace. It has been said that the gospel is unintelligible to a large class of persons in Christian lands; but the obscurity complained of results not from the nature of the gospel, but from the willful blindness of those to whom it is addressed. Pascal has said that "religion is a matter of so much importance, that it is just that those who will not be at the pains to seek it, if it is obscure, should not discover it. What can they complain of, if it is such that it may be found by seeking?" A sufficient answer to the objection we are considering, is, that *natural religion fails to influence a large portion* of those

to whom it addresses itself. Material nature around us is a revelation from God, designed to make known the Divine existence and many of the Divine attributes. It were a mistake, however, to suppose that all men see in the physical creation equal evidence of a God. To the royal poet of Israel, the heavens declared the glory of God, while in many minds all the magnificence of the starry firmament awakens scarcely one thought of the dread Deity who made and presides over it all. Do any ask why God has not so revealed Himself in the creation that none can mistake his existence and nature? We answer that He chooses to address the evidence of his being in part to the heart, and to leave without excuse all who fail to discover Him. It is enough that He has made himself known to all who wish to know Him. There is, in their respective influences, a striking resemblance between the revelation of nature and the revelation of the written word.

From the fact that the Scriptures are intelligible to and appreciated by some minds, while to others they are obscure, we may derive a positive argument for the truth of revelation; and thus the objection of the adversary may be turned in favor of our own cause. It is admitted that the prophecies in relation to the progress and triumph of the church had far different significations to different Jewish minds, according to their difference of spiritual discernment. The worldly Jew saw in them nothing but predictions of the earthly aggrandizement of his nation, and was led by them to expect that the institutions of his country would prevail in all lands; while the pious Jew was induced by them to hope that the worship of the true God, and the expectation of a holy Messiah, or obedience to him after his coming, would become universal. The character of the promised Messiah was very differently understood by different Jews before their ancient dispensation had passed away. Some imagined that he was to be a great military or political leader, a temporal king, and the deliverer of his

nation from the thralldom of political servitude; while others understood that he was to be the founder of a spiritual kingdom, that he was to be a sufferer and make a propitiatory offering of himself to Divine justice, and perhaps embraced the idea that he was to be Deity incarnate. When our Lord Jesus Christ himself first proclaimed his character and mission, they were differently understood by different classes of his hearers. Some looked upon Him as a weak and suffering and disgraced man, while others recognized Him as the great teacher, the redeemer of men, "God manifest in the flesh." In the present day, in lands nominally Christian, Christ's character is distinctly understood by some, while to others it seems altogether undefined or even wholly mythical. There are doctrines of our completed revelation which, while they beam with the brightness of mid-day on some minds, are by others wholly overlooked or present to them only a blurred and confused appearance; to some minds the whole New Testament is a chaos, while to others it presents a system of truth perfectly harmonious and symmetrical. The Scriptures teach us that all men should not understand them, and that, consequently, all men would not receive them. Christ spoke of many existing in his day who had not the eyes to see, or the ears to hear, or the hearts to understand the things of salvation. The apostle Paul affirmed that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." How different is the Bible from all the productions of men! Here is a book which to one class of men is intelligible and full of instruction, while to another class of equal intelligence it is dark, involved, and full of enigmas. Philosophy has produced no such volume; human ingenuity cannot produce such another. Such a volume must have been supernaturally suggested, and, as its moral character is pure, must have been suggested by the good spirit, and not by evil spirits. It was designed to

produce just such effects as it does produce; it predicts these effects. Why are the doctrines of revelation so luminous to some minds and so obscure to others? The operation of the Spirit of God on the heart of man affords the only solution. Now, if there are special influences of the Holy Spirit on human minds, and if that Spirit designs to take the doctrines of the Scriptures as the instrument of instruction, our professed revelation must be Divine.

It is unreasonable to object to revealed religion that those who seem to be its sincere votaries are marked by many imperfections. We speak here of the imperfections of sincere Christians; for nothing is more manifestly unjust than to charge on Christianity the faults and vices of its false professors,—faults and vices which only prove the necessity of a revelation and a want of genuine faith in the Christian system: the gross immoralities, the bitter persecutions, which have been found in the Christian church, have been the results not of the gospel, but of worldly motives,—not of faith in Christ, but of unbelief. Sincere Christians are, confessedly, imperfect; but it is to be remembered that greater imperfections than theirs are discovered among the votaries of natural religion, about the truth of which there is no question: an argument which has equal weight against both natural and revealed religion can be said to possess no real solidity. If the objection, that its votaries are imperfect, be valid with respect to one religion, it must prevail to the destruction of the credibility of every other religion, and the conclusion must be arrived at that mankind are now, and have ever been, destitute of a true religion. No man that observes the sincere Christian can fail to perceive that he goes on from strength to strength, advancing in holiness as he approaches the grave and no man can say that this ought not to be the condition of things under a system of grace. Toil and conflict, which imply a state of imperfection, are necessary to exercise and discipline the patience, energy, and courage of the Christian,

and develop his whole nature for a condition more exalted than that of the seraphim, which he is destined to attain. Every disciple of Christ has a work allotted him in the present world; but manifestly a world like this, so desolated by sin, is no fit residence for a perfect being. Perfection in Christians would remove them out of sympathy with those unconverted human beings whom they are appointed to influence; it would probably break up, to a great degree, those domestic relationships on whose existence and preservation the conversion of sinners and the advancement of the church so much depend. As God has displayed his wisdom, power, and goodness by the various combinations, compensations, and contrivances which we observe in physical nature, so He illustrates these attributes to the view of angels by the means which He employs in advancing his redeemed from a condition of unregeneracy to one of spiritual perfection.

It cannot reasonably be made an objection to the truth of revelation that it has not yet been published to all mankind.

Let us here admit the fact that revealed religion has been known only to a portion of the earth's nations: let us distinctly contemplate that fact. God's written word was at first given only to a single nation, to whom it was confined for thousands of years. During the long period of Jewish prosperity, many of the other nations were distinguished for their poetry, eloquence, military heroism, and skill, for the accuracy and extent of their learning, inventions, and discoveries. Athens had enjoyed its age of Pericles, and Rome its period of Augustan glory. The classic nations of antiquity had, however, no written revelation; the academies of accomplished pagans were without the Bible; their sylvan retreats knew no prayer to the living God; their splendid temples were the scenes of sin, and not the habitations of the Holy Spirit; their very heroes, poets, and statesmen, who are the objects of our

most enthusiastic admiration, were sunk in all the degradation of idolatry or the gloomy depths of virtual atheism; the bright flowers and luxuriant foliage of that classic age grew around and hung over the city of the dead. While the Jewish nation flourished, the majority of the nations were destitute of all that deserves the name of civilization. While we are thinking of the ancient nations as destitute of revelation, pardon a digression, that we may suggest another argument for the truth of redemption. Let us ask why the Jewish nation so excelled in theological opinions and in moral sentiments all the nations that surrounded it, although many of those nations had attained a high civilization and were in political importance and in general learning superior to it. Why did the Jewish nation, in religion, so surpass the Syrian, Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, Athenian, and Roman peoples? With these nations the Jews had constant intercourse, refusing in the main, and certainly during later ages, to receive from them their superstitions, yet unable to impress on them their own religious creed. No infidel can refuse to admit the religious superiority of the Jewish nation over all the surrounding nations of antiquity,—a superiority retained even amid political servitude. This wonderful fact can be accounted for only by supposing that the Jews received their religion by a revelation from heaven. Placing ourselves back at the time of Ezra, we may find, in the religious superiority of the Jews, proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament sufficient to satisfy every rational understanding. We are inclined to think that the Jews of the era referred to possessed as satisfactory proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament as we possess now of the inspiration of the New. We return from our digression to say that not only were all the nations of antiquity, except one, destitute of revelation, but that at this day, although eighteen hundred years have rolled away since the atonement was consummated, God's written word is

found in the hands of only a comparatively small portion of the human family.

To the objection to the truth of revelation, drawn from the fact that it has not been made known to all men, it may be replied that the privation of the heathen in respect to the Scriptures (to use the language of Butler) "may be paralleled by the manifest dispensations of Providence at present, and considering ourselves merely in our temporal capacity." We see individuals differing greatly as to their endowments of body and mind, as to the advantages of the station of life in which they are born, and as to the gifts of fortune, as they are called. We find nations differing greatly from each other as to the character of their climate and soil, as to their agricultural and commercial advantages, and as to the facilities for intellectual and moral improvement. The remedies for various bodily diseases, which are known to some nations, are entirely unknown to others, and this has come to pass in the providence of God.

To the objection we are examining it may be also replied that natural religion alone renders men morally responsible, and that the heathen have no right to claim anything more than that their accountability correspond with their degree of knowledge. They shall certainly not be punished for the rejection of, or for disobedience to, a gospel of which they have never heard. They shall be tried at last only by that law of nature which is known to all men. Says Butler, speaking on this subject: "All shadow of injustice, and indeed all harsh appearance, in the various economy of Providence, would be lost, if we would keep in mind that every merciful allowance shall be made, and no more be required of any one than what might have been equitably expected of him, from the circumstances in which he was placed, and not what might have been expected had he been placed in other circumstances: *i.e.*, in Scripture language, that every man shall be accepted according to what

he had, not according to what he had not. This, however, doth not by any means imply that all persons' condition here is equally advantageous with respect to religion."

The heathen have no right to complain that Christian nations have received the gospel, especially since so many blessings have been bestowed upon themselves by Divine providence, to which their sins have forfeited every shadow of a claim. We are peculiarly favored; but they are not treated with injustice. God was not bound to communicate a revelation to any portion of the human race, and, consequently may, according to his sovereign pleasure, justly withhold it from any portion of mankind. It belongs to his infinitely wise plan, to impart the knowledge of redemption, for a season, only partially to the nations of the earth. The proposition that God was not bound to make an atonement for the human race, and that consequently He was not bound to give a revelation to all men, deserves an extended consideration. Many have thought otherwise, and have warmly cherished and widely spread the opposite opinion: many affirm that as mankind had sinned while in a condition of impotence, and under the pressure of severe temptation, especially as the first of the race was made the representative of the rest of it without their consent or choice, and by his fall had involved them all in moral ruin, God was bound to give to men, as an act of justice, another trial for permanent holiness and happiness, and that He was bound to give them an atonement because it is necessary to that trial. A theologian, who was the former of a great ecclesiastical organization, has said: "I deny that God might justly have passed by me and all men. I reject it as a cold, precarious assertion, utterly unsupported by Holy Scripture." South, the admired preacher of the English court, has expressed the opinion that God has made an atonement for man, while He has left the angels without a gracious provision, because angels sinned unseduced from without, whereas

man sinned under the temptation of Satan. Milton has expressed the same opinion, in the words :

“ The first sort by his own suggestion fell,
Self-tempted, self-depraved ; man falls deceived
By the other first ; man, therefore, shall find grace,
The other none.”

Both South and Milton seem to have regarded the angels as less deserving of salvation than man. But neither the weakness of man as originally created, nor the temptations to which he was exposed during the period of his probation, nor the fact of the representation of all men in Adam, can give to the human race any shadow of a right to an atonement.

We reason on this subject on the hypotheses which are furnished by revelation, and say that God was not bound to provide a redemption for Adam, the first transgressor. Created, as he was, with mature and well-developed faculties, with perfect freedom of will, and in the favor of, and in the enjoyment of communion with, God, the probation to which he was exposed was, in all respects, fair. He transgressed God's commands voluntarily. His trial we know was fair, because God appointed it ; his condemnation we know was just, because God pronounced it. The temptation under which he fell neither excuses nor palliates his guilt. He sinned under no very stringent temptation. Of all the trees of the garden of Eden, only one was interdicted to innocent man, and the fruit of that tree seems not to have been, more than the other fruits of Eden, fragrant, or beautiful, or luscious. Even the desire of obtaining knowledge through the forbidden fruit was no very powerful temptation. Temptation furnishes no excuse for sin ; if it did, all sin is excusable, since it is all committed under the influence of temptation. To say that God ought to grant an atonement to man, because Adam's probation was not passed in propitious circumstances, is to say that God ought to acknowledge the imperfection of his law and administration ;

and to say that God had not given to man a full and fair probation, and therefore was obliged to give him another, is to charge the Most High with great imperfection. The provision of an atonement would not cure the defects of his probation, if it had any defects; it would not render just a trial and a condemnation which otherwise would be unjust. The pardon of an innocent man by the executive power does not render less unjust the otherwise unjust sentence which has been pronounced on him by a jury of his country. A trial under the law of God is full, fair, and final, so far as the justice of God is concerned. If a man is not fully responsible to the law, he ought not to be tried by it at all; and if a man is justly tried by a law, he is justly condemned by it, after he has been found to have transgressed it.

For the same reason that Adam had no right to an atonement, his posterity have no such right. They were represented in him, and, as far as rights are concerned, they are identical with him. If the federal relationship of the first of the race to the rest of it was right, they are justly condemned, and have lost all right to the Divine favor; if this relationship was wrong, an atonement does not remove the injustice of it.

Infidelity knows nothing of the representation in Adam. We therefore say to the infidel that he finds all men transgressors of the Divine law, and knows that the transgressors of law have no right to an atonement.

If fallen man has a right to an atonement, so have the fallen angels; and as they are not so entitled, we may conclude that neither is he. This argument is conducted on the hypothesis of the truth of revelation, but is, on that account, no less necessary to remove the objection of the infidel, which assails us in the shape of an *argumentum ad hominem*. We wish at least to show the consistency of what we affirm with revelation. There are, as the Scriptures inform us, spiritual beings fallen from their condition of primal perfection, for whom no redemption has been

provided. They have no just claim to an atonement; else they would not be reserved in chains under darkness. It is supposed by some that the condemnation of angels was more just than that of man. No distinction of that sort, however, can be properly made. Angels are moral beings; so are we. Angels sinned voluntarily; so did we. Man sinned under the pressure of temptation; so did the lost angels,—all of them certainly, except one, the first to fall. The rest were beset by powerful extrinsic temptation. The object at which all the fallen angels aimed was something more alluring than the fruit of Eden. The most of them were severely tempted from without by Lucifer, the son of the morning, who appeared before them as an angel of light, whom they had known only to revere, with whom they had lived in hallowed intercourse, and with whom they had been engaged in splendid ministries. Satan possessed peculiar facilities for leading astray his brethren of the upper sky. Lost spirits might plead, as a reason for their receiving redemption in preference to man, that their nature was originally more lofty, or that man was more favored in his probation than they, since, if his representative had stood a successful trial, all the millions of the human race would have been confirmed in bliss and holiness. Milton himself, in more places than one, expresses the opinion that the fallen angels were more than “self-tempted,” as, for example, where he represents the archangel Michael as saying to Satan,—

“How hast thou disturbed
Heaven’s blessed peace, and into nature brought
Misery, uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion? how hast thou instilled
Thy malice into thousands, once upright
And faithful, now proved false?”

This same heroic bard ascribes the pollution of once spotless angels to Satan’s “contagion vile.” If God is bound, in justice, to provide an atonement for man, He is

so bound, in all cases, to remit the penalty of his violated law, or at least to offer the transgressor a pardon, since man's probation was as favorable to him as any which moral beings could undergo. To affirm that God was bound in justice to provide an atonement for man, is to deny the *grace* of God in redemption; for that to which any being has a right on his own account cannot be regarded in any of its aspects as graciously and gratuitously bestowed on him. If God's justice required the proclamation of a scheme of mercy for man, all men ought to share its benefits; but if God's justice does not require it, no one can reasonably object to the gospel, that the glad tidings of salvation have been made known to a comparatively small portion of the human family.

The objection is still urged, that, if the gospel be Divine, it ought to have made more rapid and successful progress in the world. It is triumphantly asked, if the gospel be true, why have so many of the nations of the earth remained unevangelized, during the many centuries which have elapsed since Christianity was first proclaimed? if justice is not bound to effect the result alluded to, why has not grace effected it?

It is a sufficient answer to this objection, that God's providences, like his nature, are inscrutable to man. We at least must not expect to ascertain all the motives that move the infinite mind.

We can, however, perceive, to no inconsiderable extent, the wisdom of God in the gradual diffusion of the gospel. We know the value of the Divine prophecies as the means of establishing Christian truth. The lapse of ages was necessary, that they might be so fulfilled as to produce in the minds of men the most sincere conviction of their heavenly source. Had the prophecies and their fulfillment come near to each other in point of time, to men looking at them from a distance it would have been difficult to tell whether the events had not preceded the pretended predic-

tions. God makes known his wisdom by the adaptation of means to ends. This we see in the gradual growth of the tree, in the gradual formation of alluvial soils, indeed in all the operations of material nature. So, this and other Divine perfections are more fully displayed by the gradual manner in which the gospel has been established, than they could have been by the instant evangelization of the world. The student of ancient history can perceive that the Messiah came "in the fullness of the time," or at the period when the world had become fully ripe for his presence. We see the wisdom of God in raising up, as one of the instruments for diffusing the gospel, that great Macedonian power, which required years for its growth. God, in his providence, gave facility to Alexander's rapid conquest of the deteriorated nations. The Macedonian kingdom was established, and Alexander was raised up and made great and victorious by Divine providence, that the Greek language might become spoken through many portions of the East and be the channel through which the knowledge of Christ's history and doctrines might be communicated. God has also displayed his wisdom, in connection with redemption, by establishing the Roman empire, which required ages in reaching its maturity and culmination. That empire was permitted to become almost universal, for the purpose of promoting a unity of the nations favorable to the extension of the religion of Christ. Since the Messiah has come, many distinct displays of the Divine wisdom have been made in the means that have been employed to prepare different nations for the reception of the gospel, which, so far as we can judge, could not have been made without the lapse of long periods of time. Nor must it be overlooked, that, in the manner in which the gospel achieves its conquests, God unfolds his perfections, not only to men, but to the inhabitants of other, perhaps of all, worlds.

God in redemption acts in accordance with all his known

proceedings in creation and providence ; and if it can be said that redemption is not the work of God because its effects are gradually realized, it may also be said that the creation is not God's work, because it has been gradually accomplished, and that nothing is providentially effected on earth that is slow in reaching its completion.

The world was slowly organized to become the residence of man. The matter of the world was indeed created instantly, and when universal darkness covered this portion of God's dominions God instantly illumined it, saying: "Let there be light: and there was light." But the organization of the world, which is commonly called creation, was conducted gradually. In six days God created the heavens and the earth ; and if these six days were literal days, yet for God this work must be regarded as gradual. Our heavens and earth were organized in six days ; but other heavens had been organized before,—the starry nebulæ, for example, whose light is just reaching us, after traveling for tens of thousands of years. Many regard the days of the creation as periods of vast and indefinite length ; and if they were so, the organization of our solar system was gradually effected. It is probable that, before the six days of creation described by Moses, God had been for vast ages organizing and creating on the surface of the earth,—preparing it to become the residence of man. A layer of rocks was laid during one long period ; a deposit of coal was made during another. God, in the creation of animals, seems to have worked up (to speak after the manner of men) with artistic effort to the creation of man.

In providence God often employs long periods of time in the accomplishment of particular purposes. Providence is God's upholding and governing his creation, the execution of the laws which He gave to nature at the beginning. It were impious to suppose that He has retired from his creatures ; it is unreasonable to suppose that He has no part in guiding and moulding their destinies ; but we must

believe that in Him we live and move and have our being. He "lives through all life," notices the fall of a sparrow, numbers the hairs of our head, arrays the lily in its virgin vesture, paints the flowers with their varied hues, and gives its splendor to the glittering firmament. He as really works on the earth now, in the exercise of his wisdom, power, and benevolence, as when at first He formed the sea and the dry land, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the inhabitants of the deep, and man,—the masterpiece of his creation. Who that has observed the processes of nature can doubt that God works gradually in his providence? "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." A tree does not attain its maturity in a day, or even in a single summer. The oak, that throws its giant arms to the storms of winter, was once an acorn; gradually has it risen from the ground, at one time a feeble twig, afterwards long towered above by other trees of the forest, until, after centuries of growth, it has attained its present proud proportions and majestic strength. Those tall ships, which, in God's providence, spread their wings to the breeze and bear the commerce of nations, and sometimes pour forth the thunder of their artillery, shaking sea and land, had their germ in the little acorn. In the formation of a human government, like that of Britain for example, God employs long periods of time. Not suddenly, but gradually, have great discoveries and inventions been made, and have mankind been prepared for the reception of any great practical truth. Civilization has proceeded with slow steps in the world; and God is gradually removing ignorance and error from every science.

If God has employed long periods of time in accomplishing his works of creation and providence, much more may we expect Him to do so in conducting the gospel to its consummation; for redemption is the greatest of his works. The Deity displays his perfections in calling the

universe into existence from nothing, in covering the earth with objects of beauty, in kindling the heavens into magnificent glory, in the creation of man in moral perfection, in the creation of the seraphim, in his march of universal providence; but He has made the brightest display of his nature in uniting justice with mercy, and combining Divinity with human nature, so as to elevate man to a position in his favor and government, such as the sinless have not attained. Let us not endeavor to limit the Eternal One in his sublimest operations within the brief circuit of a human life. Depend on it, that Divine religion which at first won millions from dark superstitions, which in a single century gave spiritual life to such multitudes in Asia and Europe, making the fragrant flower of virtue to spring up everywhere in its path, will ultimately triumph over every obstacle, will challenge and receive universal homage, and, filling all lands with truth, mercy, and righteousness, will become enshrined the religion of the world. All political events, all the wrath and efforts of the enemies of the church, all the exertions of its friends,—their prayers and toils,—all the progress of Christian truth at home and in foreign lands alike, all the discoveries of science and all the products of genius, all the effects of winter and summer, all the courses of the winds and the waves of the ocean,—all shall combine successfully in producing the grand result, the universal establishment of the empire of the Son of God in the world.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE OBJECTION FOUNDED ON THE SALVATION OF BAD MEN, AND THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE INNOCENT FOR THE GUILTY, CONSIDERED.—(*Note, in which the imputation of the guilt of the first man to his posterity is proved by the light of nature.*)

AMONG the many objections that have been brought against the scheme of redemption is this,—that it conflicts with a law which conscience exhibits, according to which men are justly rewarded and punished in eternity only in accordance with their moral deeds and character in the present life. It is affirmed that nothing can be more unjust than that men of most unstained moral reputation should sink into perdition, while men whose character has been depraved to the last degree through long life are, at the hour of death, forgiven by the Almighty and received into eternal happiness.

We deny that the gospel in any way conflicts with the teachings of conscience. The conscience demands, indeed, a satisfaction of the Divine law; but the gospel teaches that a satisfaction is made for believers by the sufferings of Christ. The conscience demands that good works be presented as the basis of future happiness; but the gospel teaches that the good works of Christ, imputed to believers, are the foundation of their claim to eternal felicity. Conscience and experience alike teach that a holy, moral character insures happiness, and that without such a character men must be miserable; but conscience is satisfied with the ruin of merely moral men when informed that their hearts are unholy, and with the salvation of men whose character has been depraved, when convinced that their

moral natures are renewed, before their admission into heaven. The gospel does not set aside the Divine law; does not render the payment of the law's penalty unnecessary; does not dispense with the rule according to which moral deeds are the only passport to future happiness; does not overturn the law that future happiness is determined, as to its existence and degree, by the moral character of him who is the recipient of it.

Let us examine more minutely the objection presented. The perdition of what are called merely moral men is manifestly just. Many human beings, of the most amiable dispositions and of strict integrity, depart from the world without one emotion of genuine penitence, and without faith in the great atonement. We are shut up to the conclusion that they are lost. Is their perdition just? It is. No human being is excellent enough to deserve salvation. Whatever different estimates men may place on each other, in the sight of a God of infinite purity all men are unholy, guilty, and condemned. The most moral man on earth, who has not been renewed by grace, conveyed in connection with Christ's atonement, stands a culprit before God's bar, and is unfitted by his moral character for the felicities of heaven. He may be brave, patriotic, and philanthropic, but he is wanting in that piety which is necessary to secure the Divine complacency. His moral acts are destitute of merit before God, and of holiness, because they are not performed from a sincere desire to promote the Divine glory. Besides, the man whom we have described has willfully refused the blood-sealed pardon that has been offered him, preferring to stand before God on his own pretended merits, thus provoking the Most High by his presumptuous self-righteousness, and his proud rejection of the proffers of reconciliation through a Redeemer; thus trampling under foot the Son of God, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace. Such a man may be well fitted for the elegant associations of this

earth, but has no relish or fitness for the worship of heaven.

The transgressors of the Divine law may be pardoned and made happy. The objection under notice denies the possibility of the sinner's pardon, and it is necessary to show that there is no injustice on the part of God in bestowing forgiveness on any transgressor. If the guilty are to be rewarded, in all cases, according to their personal merits, and pardon is impossible to man, the conclusion is inevitable, that all the adult population of the world will perish,—a conclusion at which all human minds and hearts instantly revolt. From the analogy of nature we may derive a satisfactory argument against the objection before us. Men are not only permitted, but required, to pardon each other's offenses. The parent often forgives the transgression of parental law. Pardons are often dispensed by human governments; nor have men been accustomed to dispute the wisdom and justice of the arrangement according to which this is done. Men in all ages have asked and expected the Divine forgiveness. The idea of the possibility of it may indeed have come originally by tradition; but that all nations accept it, and all religions embrace it, is very satisfactory proof that there is nothing in it opposed to man's sense of justice or uncongenial to his conscience. Besides, God is greatly glorified in the bestowment of pardons on sinful men, and He is as much delighted Himself in the exercise of grace as in the administration of justice. We can well imagine that the angels of heaven never adore so much the infinite Majesty as when they behold Him imparting forgiveness to the guilty and consolation and enjoyment to the wretched. To debar the Deity from deeds of mercy which are so beautiful, and to deprive Him of the offered gratitude of forgiven penitents, were to limit his dominion. We are unwilling to relinquish a conception of God so full of loveliness as that of his reserving to Himself the right, in certain circum-

stances, of imparting forgiveness, nor is it improbable that those ideas of God are the most just which reflect the highest honor on his nature and government and render Him most attractive to his intelligent creatures. Remove from the minds of men the idea of Divine pardon, and all religion is removed from them; for all experience has assured us that men are induced to approach the Deity, to pray to Him, to commune with Him, only when they desire to offer some propitiation for their sins and hope to secure his forgiveness. It is equally true that men exercise repentance only when they expect their past sins to be obliterated from the Divine book of remembrance. The advocates of the opinion that the penalties of God's moral laws are as inexorably executed on the personal violator of them as those of the laws of human health may indeed possess rigid moral habits, but are destitute of pious devotion, of the spirit of prayer, and of all that may be justly called religious sentiment. To say the least, reason has left this question of the possibility of forgiveness with God so much in doubt, that we may well listen to what a well-attested revelation has declared with respect to it.

If God may pardon at all, it is not unreasonable to suppose that He may justly pardon the worst offenders. To the Divine eye there is little real difference between the moral character of those whom we regard as moral and of those whom we consider most depraved. If God has no right to pardon the flagrant transgressor, He has no right to pardon at all; and if He has a right to forgive any transgressor whatever, He may choose to glorify the riches of his grace in the salvation of the worst. It is said that the opinion that God sometimes dispenses converting grace to very bad men during the last moments of their lives is adapted to produce disastrous results, by inducing men to continue in sin. It is, however, no objection to the credibility of redemption that many of its truths have been

perverted and abused. No truth is so sacred that human wickedness may not turn it to evil uses. It is much to be doubted whether men do become worse because they believe that they may be pardoned after a long career of gross transgression. On the other hand, they who are looking to the gospel as their last resort are restrained, to some degree, by its influence, and are apt to avoid the excesses of iniquity into which they would otherwise run. It is the grace of the gospel that makes it so mighty a moral power in the world; and the greater that grace appears, and the more desperate the cases in which it is manifestly exercised, the more attractive the gospel appears,—the more it commands the attention and affections of men. Deprive the Christian religion of its power to save the worst of men in their greatest extremity, and you strip it of its highest distinction and glory. Men can be justified before God by faith only, and faith, from its very nature, is an adequate instrument of justification, whether exercised by the most amiable and moral or by the most profane and wicked of the human race; whether in the bright morning of life or amid the gathering shades of life's decay; whether in moments of joyous healthfulness, or as the tenement of the soul is hastening to its dissolution.

It must here be remembered that God pardons none for whose sanctification He does not make ample provision. Every forgiven sinner is a renewed sinner, and commences, from the period of his forgiveness, a new and holy career. The sinner who is pardoned during the last moments of his life carries with him into eternity a renovated moral nature. We cannot doubt the ability of God to bestow on any human soul instant moral perfection. We admit, however, that there would seem to be no wisdom or justice in the pardon of a being of whose reformation there was no hope.

The argument for the possibility of man's forgiveness would not be complete if we left out of view the great

atonement. But God may justly omit to execute the penalty of the violated law on the believer, since that penalty has been paid for him in the sufferings of Christ the Redeemer. It might with some show of reason be objected to the bestowal of a pardon by human governments, that when it occurs a degree of obedience is found wanting to the law, and its threatened punishment remains unexecuted; whereas, when God pardons the transgressor of his law, the ends of justice are as fully attained, in the vindication of the majesty and sanctity of that law, as though the sinner himself had suffered its penalty or fully obeyed it. It is when we consider how ample the atonement of Christ is, that we see most clearly the justice of God in saving the worst offenders against his law.

The whole scheme of Christianity has been objected to, on the ground that it would be unjust on the part of God to appoint or permit the innocent to suffer for the sake of the guilty; the possibility of a vicarious atonement for human guilt has been denied. The vicarious sufferings of Christ, it may be replied, are in analogy with much that we discover in nature; and the objection just indicated weighs as heavily against the constitution of nature as against Christianity itself. Butler says of such objections, "that they conclude altogether against God's whole original constitution of nature, and the whole daily course of Divine providence in the government of the world, *i.e.*, against the whole scheme of theism and the whole notion of religion, as against Christianity. For the world is a constitution or system, whose parts have a mutual reference to each other; and there is a scheme of things gradually carrying on, called the course of nature, to the carrying on of which God has appointed us, in various ways, to contribute. And when, in the daily course of natural providence, it is appointed that innocent people should suffer for the faults of the guilty, this is liable to the very same objection as the instance we are now considering. The infinitely greater

importance of the appointment of Christianity, which is objected against, does not hinder, but it may be, as it plainly is, an appointment of the same kind, with what the world affords us daily examples of. Nay, if there were any force at all in the objection, it would be stronger in one respect against natural providence than against Christianity; because under the former we are in many cases commanded, and even necessitated, whether we will or no, to suffer for the faults of others; whereas the sufferings of Christ were voluntary. The world's being under the righteous government of God does, indeed, imply that finally, and upon the whole, every one shall receive according to his personal deserts; and the general doctrine of the whole Scripture is that this shall be the completion of the Divine government. But during the progress, and, for aught we know, even in the order of the completion of this moral scheme, vicarious punishments may be fit, and absolutely necessary." If we would account for the origin of the depravity of the human race, we must suppose that through the representation or vicarious sin of the first man, all men have become guilty. Infants also suffer before they become actual transgressors; so that the sin of another must be regarded as the cause of their sufferings. Children are often seen to suffer for the sins of their parents. Subjects often suffer for the sins of their governors. The best of men often undergo great toil, anxiety, and suffering, in relieving others, and those, sometimes, very bad men. In courts of justice, one man is permitted to become surety for another, and that not only in civil but also in criminal cases.

It is admitted that it would not be wise and expedient frequently to permit a substitution of the innocent for the guilty; but no man can deny that it might sometimes subserve the highest ends of justice to permit it. We can conceive of a monarch's maintaining the majesty of his law better, in some cases, by bearing the penalty of it in his own person, though innocent, than by inflicting that penalty

on the real transgressor. We applaud the man who lays down his life to atone for the wrong-doing of his country. We admire the conduct of Codrus, who, upon being told that his death was necessary to his country's safety, determined to sacrifice his life, and, after having sought death in vain by exposing himself in the fore-front of the hottest battles, obtained it at last at the hand of a common soldier, whom he, disguised in the camp, struck and provoked. When the city of Calais was besieged by Edward III., that English monarch consented to raise the siege, on condition that six of the principal citizens should deliver themselves haltered and barefoot, to be marched into the English camp to be put to death. St. Pierre and his son were the first to offer themselves, and then four others, who were all accordingly conveyed into the presence of the conqueror. This is an example of self-sacrifice, or at least designed vicarious suffering, which the reason and conscience approve. Some of the loftiest and purest acts of virtue performed on earth have been those of vicarious suffering. We cannot say that the involuntary substitution of an innocent man for the guilty conflicts with the Divine justice, since we see instances of it in nature; but we see more plainly that there is no injustice in permitting the voluntary sacrifice of one man for another, since such suffering, besides accomplishing a general good, may so much ennoble and purify him who performs it.

The idea of the innocent suffering to appease the wrath of the Deity towards guilty man has long and in all countries been familiar to men; it was expressed in the propitiatory sacrifices of the Jews and the heathen alike; and this convinces us that it receives no contradiction from the human reason and conscience. We do not mean that it convinces us that there was no injustice in the sacrifice of the particular heathen victims; but that it persuades us that the idea of substitution is not in all cases opposed to man's natural sense of justice.

Although no other example of vicarious suffering had been presented in the history of the world, we cannot charge with injustice the substitution of the Son of God in the place of guilty men. God may disclose to us in the gospel new modes of procedure. He may perform, in his kingdom of grace, deeds with which we find no analogies in the kingdom of nature. All the ends of justice are certainly attained in the sufferings of Christ; sin is punished, and its evil is fully exhibited; the law is vindicated and honored; the authority of the law is re-proclaimed; men are deterred from transgression. God Himself well knew what would be the moral results of the atonement. He knew that it would promote the increase of holiness in his universe. We cannot doubt that the temporary sufferings of a being of infinite dignity like the Son of God are equivalent to all the protracted and eternal sufferings which the human race might have experienced in paying the penalty of the violated law. Christ endured voluntarily, and even joyfully, the sufferings which He at first proposed, and had for ages meditated; and this distinguishes his from all other vicarious sufferings,—that He had a right to control his own destiny, to dispose of his own happiness,—that, as Divine, He had power to lay down his life and take it again. Christ also arose unhurt from his sufferings. Many have seemed to be crushed and ruined by their voluntary sufferings; “but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.” We see the atonement producing the highest happiness alike of those who partake of its benefits and of Him who is the author of it. It is not enough for the objector, if he would have any influence against redemption, to show that the justice of it cannot be perceived by men; he must show, also, that it involves manifest injustice; and that he is unable to do. It is easy to declaim against Christianity,—easy to speak of the injustice of vicarious suffering,—easy to affirm the absurdity of supposing the

Deity to bear the penalty of his own law ; but we must consider that our ideas of what is right, or expedient, or possible, are limited, and that to pretend to dictate to the eternal God about a matter so vast, awful, and infinite as that of redemption, were on our part the highest presumption. If men could, with any show of reason, do so, there are many things in God's system of creation and providence to which they would prefer more violent objections than any which they have brought against the scheme of redemption ; no man in his senses, however, would think of doubting the justice of the God of creation and providence. It is not a little remarkable that men should pretend to see injustice in that plan of salvation disclosed by Christ, which more than anything else impresses us with ideas of the Divine holiness, and which more than anything in nature is adapted to reflect the Divine attribute of justice on the world. In view of all that has been said, we may conclude that all who disbelieve the gospel justly remain under the Divine condemnation, and that all who embrace it are justly forgiven. The first are lost on account of the violation of Divine law ; the latter are saved through the application to them of the Divine atonement.

We have alluded, in this chapter, to the scriptural doctrine of the regeneration and sanctification of men through the influence of the Spirit of God. Infidels have spoken of that doctrine as unreasonable, and as so, especially, because it conflicts with the moral agency of man. If the reasonableness of the doctrine in question can be determined by human authority, we say that it has been embraced by the wisest and best men who have ever lived. If the *moral effects* of a doctrine can decide the question of its reasonableness, we say that this doctrine conforms to reason, because it has produced the purest morals and piety ever known on earth. The belief of it has imparted to Christian truth its most powerful and salutary efficacy ; where it is denied, the gospel itself is barren and inoperative. It

cannot be unreasonable to think that the Father of spirits communes with his children. The Divine Spirit operates on material nature, and He does so necessarily; else He could not be its sovereign; nor can we conceive how He could be the sovereign of human minds, so as to render them subservient in accomplishing his purposes with respect to them, if He were unable to influence them. Men, for example poets and orators, exert, even physical nature exerts, an influence upon our minds and hearts; and why may not the infinite Ruler of the world exert such an influence? Nor is the freedom of the human will destroyed by this Divine influence, any more than it is destroyed by that of the poet, or the orator, or physical nature. In the *progress* of his sanctification the Christian is influenced at every step by the Spirit of God; but we have reason to believe, from the teaching of the Scriptures, that he may resist the hallowed influence; and if that be true, his moral agency is manifestly not interfered with by the operations of the Divine Agent who sanctifies him. It is the opinion of many judicious divines, that, in the work of the soul's regeneration, the influence of the Spirit of God is irresistible. That opinion is not, however, in conflict with any right theory of the moral agency of man. We cannot suppose that the God of holiness would ever exert his influence in rendering a holy nature corrupt, so that its volitions would become, necessarily, sinful. God cannot be the author of sin. But to change a corrupt into a holy nature, even by irresistible power, is an act not unworthy of God, and is no infringement of the moral liberty of the creature. It is a new creation, and no more than man's first creation with a holy nature is it a violation of his moral agency. Man indeed, whenever he acts, whether he sins against or whether he obeys God, acts voluntarily; and the power of voluntary action constitutes all that we know of the freedom of the will.

Note to Chapter XXII.—It was said in the foregoing chapter that “if we would account for the origin of the depravity of the human race, we must suppose that through the representation or the vicarious sin of the first man, all men have become guilty.” Some may regard us as chargeable with a *petitio principii* in using such an argument,—with attempting to prove the truth of revelation by taking for granted one of its most disputed doctrines. To show that we are not justly liable to the charge imagined, we shall endeavor now to prove that the doctrine of the representation of all mankind by one man is a doctrine of reason as well as of revelation; that reason confirms and establishes it. We do not affirm that reason was able originally to discover the manner of man’s apostasy and fall: on the other hand, the philosophers of antiquity agitated the question of the origin of human depravity, without receiving a gleam of light from any quarter on the perplexing subject: we do mean, however, that since revelation has pointed out the way in which men have become sinners, reason not only does not contradict the statement, but accepts it as the only possible solution of the question. Reason teaches us, without any aid from revelation, that all men are sinners; that they are deeply depraved; that they sin from the first dawn of their moral agency; and that they have been sinners from a very remote period of time. The question is, How did men become sinners?

1. Men are not sinners because God made them so. Reason teaches not only that God exists, but that He is infinitely holy, and that as such He cannot be the author of sin. He could not, therefore, have created man in a state of sin. Man must have been pure when he first came from the hands of his Maker.

2. Men have not become sinners by the mere force of evil example and education. Some, indeed, suppose that men are born as morally pure as were the first pair in Eden, and that by evil associations alone they become corrupt. How then has it happened that none have escaped the dread contamination? No example or education, however pure, and no separation from mankind, has ever secured holiness to a single human being. We know, indeed, that men are born with unholy moral natures; for they exhibit sinful dispositions before the period of moral agency, and they commit sin from the first period of moral agency; the first thoughts, volitions, emotions, and outward actions, for which they are responsible, are sinful.

3. Men do not become sinners by mere inheritance. Some affirm that human depravity is sufficiently accounted for by supposing that we inherit from our first father a corrupt nature. Men do, certainly, inherit depraved dispositions: man is begotten in the moral likeness of his sinful sire. But the mere inheritance of a sinful nature does

not sufficiently account for the dark phenomenon of man's curse. Why this corruption of descent? Why is human blood attainted? To say that depravity comes by inheritance alone is to separate man's condition from the moral law, and to ignore, to a degree, his moral agency: men must become corrupt in connection with moral law. It is to say that men have become morally corrupt without the existence of any transgression for which they are legally responsible, and thus to charge God with corrupting the nature of men, or permitting it to become corrupt, when they were perfectly innocent, or, in other words, when no transgression was chargeable against them. It is to say that men have become corrupt without a legal trial or moral probation. According to the theory we are opposing, men had no opportunity or chance (if the word be admissible) to attain a better estate. It is said that we inherit from our immediate ancestors peculiar evil qualities. We do, indeed; but we inherit these because we are already accursed on account of the first transgression of the first man,—our moral representative.

4. We have shown that men are corrupt, not because God made them so, not by the force of mere example and education, not by mere inheritance. Reason can conceive of but one other mode of accounting for the depravity of men, viz., by the representation of all other men in the first man; and reason must adopt that mode. It may be said that we did not choose our representative. We reply that human beings do not always choose those representatives for whose actions they are fully responsible. God chose for us our moral representative, which was better than our having chosen him for ourselves. Granting that the objection that we did not choose our representative has some weight, as it seems that it ought to have, we must accept the conclusion given, in the face of it, because, all things considered, it is the conclusion most easily reconciled with the justice, and, indeed, with the whole character, of God

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RECORD OF MIRACLES AS AN OBJECTION TO CHRISTIANITY.

THE alliance of miracles, in the field of physical nature, with redemption has been urged as an objection to it; it has been said that redemption cannot be true, because the book that discloses it contains an account of miracles which must be regarded as false, since miracles themselves are impossible. We admit that if it can be proved that miracles are impossible the whole of Christianity must be abandoned.

The argument for the truth of the Christian religion, drawn from the miracles that attest it, is clear and conclusive. It is not, however, the aim of this volume to present that argument. Redemption can be proved without the aid of the testimony of miracles. There is no difficulty in supposing that God may so impress a revelation with his character, so impress it with himself, as to render it as manifestly the work of his hands as are the ocean, the forests, the firmament, and man. The internal evidences of our religion ought to satisfy every mind of its truth. It may be asked: Why then have miracles been performed and recorded? They may have been necessary to give currency to Christianity before the canon of the Scriptures was completed, or to gain for our religion a foothold in the world, even although the canon of the Scriptures had been complete at the time of their performance. Nevertheless, they may have ceased to be an indispensable proof of the Divinity of our religion. God may have chosen, and it is a proof of his benevolence that He has chosen, to furnish

us with two sufficient methods of testing his revelation. He has multiplied the evidences of Christianity: He has furnished more, much more, testimony in its favor than is absolutely necessary to afford an unanswerable argument for its truth. Our minds are directed to the subject of miracles at this time, simply for the purpose of answering the objection to the gospel drawn from their connection with it; and our argument for redemption would have been complete without any reference to them, had not the infidel affirmed that they are impossible and incredible, and that any narration of their occurrence ought to be treated as false.

A miracle is a suspension of, or a departure from, the ordinary laws of nature, and as such it is the work of only Divine power. All wonderful events are not miraculous, because many of them are in accordance with the established order of nature. Satanic power may perform many wonderful things, but Satan can do nothing that is really miraculous. *God only* can work a miracle. The miracles which attest the truth of Christianity are not only really, but *evidently*, such as no human, or angelic, or Satanic power could accomplish. They prove the truth of revelation, since they are the testimony of God himself to it; for we know that God would not do violence to the laws of physical nature for the purpose of establishing a falsehood in the minds of men.

In answer to the objection we are considering, it is necessary only to show that miracles cannot be disproved: and if they cannot be shown to be positively false, we are left to decide the claims of Christianity on its internal evidence, without any reference to them. Although miracles were not susceptible of proof, although the testimony to their occurrence were not conclusive to the minds of the present generation, still they might have occurred; and it is sufficient for us, so far as our general argument is concerned, to admit the possibility of them.

We affirm that *miracles are possible*. They are certainly as much within the compass of Divine power as was the creation of the world. Omnipotence can effect anything that does not imply a contradiction; and we can have no difficulty in believing that He who enacted the laws of nature can repeal them, according to his sovereign pleasure. It seems to us also absurd to imagine that God is cut off from the very possibility of making any new communication to his rational creatures. Indeed, nothing but atheism can consistently deny the possibility of miracles, and in the minds of those who do deny it there doubtless exists a secret disbelief not merely of the Divine providence, but of the Divine existence. Pantheism denies the possibility of miracles, but it denies also the creation, and is only a form of atheism. A God who cannot create and cannot destroy and cannot change the order of his universe is not a God; and a universe which the Deity cannot alter must be self-existent, independent, and eternal. By nothing that we have here said have we designed to intimate that God has not enacted the laws of nature, or prescribed to Himself rules for the conduct of his universal affairs, from which He does not often depart. Even Hume himself admits that miracles are possible, while he declares that they are incredible. Not a witness can be summoned from all the past to prove that Christ did not cure the blind, raise the dead, and break Himself from the fetters of the tomb.

The objection to the alliance of miracles with redemption has been fully answered; but further to show its unreasonableness we shall proceed to prove that a miracle is *credible*. It is susceptible of proof to the human understanding. Its credibility, as is well known, has been denied. The celebrated "Essay on Miracles" was written expressly to show that miraculous events do not admit of proof. A miracle is credible because it is possible. In the existence of anything that we can understand we may believe, on the testimony of those who themselves have seen it; and the mira-

cles of Christ—such as raising the dead, curing the blind, and stilling the sea—are things which come within the reach of the human understanding. If Christ performed the miracles ascribed to Him, they who witnessed them understood them to be facts and miracles; and if any other deed of like character were performed in like circumstances, the spectator of it would be bound to believe in it as miraculous. It is also true that a man may testify to anything that he has seen; and we are as much bound, in certain cases, to believe the testimony of witnesses to facts which we have not seen ourselves as we are to believe the testimony of our own senses. If miracles are themselves possible, a man may believe in a miracle when he witnesses it himself; and if the spectator of it may believe in it, he may testify to it in such a way that his testimony may properly produce in others a faith as strong as his own. Many things that have been reported to us we believe as fully as anything we have witnessed; for example, we no more doubt the existence of London and Paris than we doubt that we live. So much confidence have we in the testimony of other men, that if a number of honest and intelligent men were to contradict the evidence of our senses as to some particular facts, we would doubt it ourselves and accept their testimony. Things the most wonderful and altogether unlike anything we have witnessed ourselves, and some of these things the occurrences of past centuries, are believed by us with the utmost confidence, because they have been attested by men of intelligence and veracity. Certainly there is no fact uncontradicted by the testimony of our own senses, which witnesses of a certain kind may not induce us to believe. *Everything that is possible is, in its own nature, susceptible of proof;* may be known by being seen; and may be made known by the spectators of it to others. It is as natural to receive the testimony of others as that of our own senses; and the confidence men have in it is the bond of society; so that

if it were destroyed society itself would be thrown into anarchy.

It is said that human witnesses may deceive; men often lie. But the senses may also deceive us; the eyes of men may be jaundiced; men may have optical illusions. The testimony of our senses in a healthy state must be believed in, notwithstanding their liability, in an unhealthy state, to deceive. So the testimony of honest men, in circumstances to judge correctly of the events to which they testify, must be received, although men often bear testimony that is false.

It may be said that the testimony to miracles is contradicted by other evidence. But what evidence disproves the miracles of Christ? They are not disproved by the evidence of our senses, and cannot be, for we were not present in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago, where and when they are said to have been performed. Consciousness offers no testimony adverse to Christ's miracles, for miracles are not facts that belong directly to consciousness. It may be said, indeed, that whereas our consciousness may be said to teach that the same causes always produce the same effects, and that whereas miracles are effects different from those which the same causes have usually produced, therefore consciousness denies miracles. It must be considered, however, that when a miracle takes place *new causes* are brought into operation. Direct Divine agency is a new cause, and we know not what other subordinate causes God may make to intervene between Himself and the miraculous effect. It is also true that it cannot be said that our reason opposes the testimony to miracles; for reason cannot authoritatively pronounce *a priori* on the question of God's giving a revelation, or the mode of his attesting a revelation, were He pleased to give one. Reason, however, may say thus much,—that it is probable that God has given a revelation to his erring and benighted creature, man, and that it is incredible that He has not reserved

to Himself the power of attesting it in the most effective manner.

Hume's celebrated argument against miracles is a masterpiece of sophistry. It has justly been called a *petitio principii*. In affirming that miracles are contradicted by experience, he takes for granted (as has been often shown) the very thing in dispute, viz., whether experience—that is, the universal experience of mankind—is opposed to miracles; or if by experience he means individual experience, then is it true that experience is opposed to miracles, but only in the same way in which it is opposed to everything which we have not personally witnessed. If Hume's argument be regarded as valid, not only is Divine revelation impossible, but all the wonderful events recorded in history, and indeed all history itself,—all things that we have not ourselves *experienced* or witnessed,—are incredible; and his argument, in thus proving “much too much,” proves indeed nothing. Celebrated lawyers have said (as, for example, Starkie) that if the principles involved in Hume's argument were adopted, all the laws of human testimony, and all the courts of human justice, would be subverted. The skeptical essayist presents his argument in its strongest form when he says that it is more probable that they who have borne testimony to Christ's miracles should have lied, than that the miracles themselves should have been performed, since we have known men to bear false testimony, but have never seen nature depart from her ordinary course. The same reasoning, however, would lead us to doubt the word of all witnesses to any extraordinary fact. We may justify our disbelief of any wonderful occurrence by saying, on Hume's principles, if they be admissible, that it is more probable that the witnesses have lied than that the event has occurred, since we have often known men to lie, but have never seen so wonderful an event. We affirm, however, that it is impossible for men of a certain character, in certain circumstances, to lie; and

that a number of men of known intelligence and honesty should testify to facts about whose existence they could not be mistaken, and should seal their testimony with their blood, and yet should lie in giving this testimony, is as miraculous as any event that can well be imagined. The human mind, as well as physical nature, has its laws, and it is a law of human nature that good and intelligent men never utter falsehoods with respect to anything which they understand, especially when the utterance of those falsehoods opposes all their interests. Many men do lie under certain temptations, but there are circumstances in which, if men of tried honesty and intelligence were to utter falsehoods, we should say that a miracle had occurred,—a subversion of man's moral nature as great as any that is said to have occurred in the domain of physical nature. It is contrary to our experience,—not that some men lie, but that good men, or indeed that any men, deliberately sacrifice every worldly advantage in testifying to what they know to be false. Such a thing is contrary to universal experience; it has never occurred in the world, or, if it has, there is no proof of its occurrence. Hume has said that “no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle unless it be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish.” We are ready to adopt the criterion here suggested, and we affirm that it is less incredible that Christ has risen from the dead than that his twelve disciples and others have laid down their lives in testimony to what they knew to be false. If men of sound sense and unimpeached moral character, with every motive pressing on them to persuade them to the utterance of truth only, may combine to impose a falsehood on the world, our confidence in all human testimony is destroyed, and we must be skeptical with respect to everything that is reported to us as having occurred in past ages, and as to everything that exists at present except what we ourselves have witnessed. A

miracle such as is implied in the falsehood supposed, being not only subversive of the laws of man's moral nature, but conducive to universal skepticism, would be the greatest of miracles; such a thing is, however, destitute of all proof, and it is wholly incredible because the bare supposition of it asperses the wisdom, benevolence, and rectitude of God. The miracles of Jesus Christ, beneficent in the highest degree in their immediate results, and adapted to diffuse happiness widely throughout the human family, are worthy of God; but that the testimony of the best men, uttered in circumstances the most favorable to truth, should prove false, would be a malignant miracle, disastrous to human happiness, inasmuch as it would be destructive of that confidence among men on whose existence domestic and social happiness depends; it would destroy our confidence in the God who has so made us that we necessarily, or at least naturally, believe such testimony. God has sometimes repealed the laws of physical nature for moral purposes, but God never has repealed, and man never can repeal, the laws of our moral nature. Hume refused to accept the testimony of his senses as to the existence of an external world, but in doing so he did violence to common sense, and adopted a theory which he never practiced. A man's pretended incredulity in such a matter does not lead us to doubt that God has so constituted man that he believes in the existence of surrounding matter. So a man's incredulity as to miracles does not lead us to doubt that it is the will of God that we should not reject, in any case, the best human testimony to a fact, when it is uncontradicted by our personal and positive experience.

The credibility of miracles may be further argued from the opinion of mankind in all ages and nations. All men have expected or believed in direct Divine interpositions,—an expectation and a belief which could not have existed if miracles were themselves incredible.

We aim another blow at the objection we are considering,

by showing that miracles are *probable*. Reason furnishes no objection against, but rather affords a presumption in favor of them. If man had remained in his primal innocence, it is probable that God would have given him verbal or written revelations. It is especially probable that God has given a revelation to man as he now is,—because it is necessary to promote the best welfare of human society on earth, necessary to enlighten and relieve the mind of man on the subject of the eternal future, necessary to secure his forgiveness, and necessary to elevate his moral nature and prepare him for everlasting happiness. The gift of a revelation is itself a miracle. It is also probable that miracles would be employed to attest any given revelation; it is even supposed that a revelation could not establish itself without their aid. Prophecy itself is a miracle, and is a necessary part of a revelation as well as a necessary proof of it. Miracles, if not an indispensable, are certainly a very suitable means of attesting a revelation. If a revelation to man is probable, and miracles are necessary to the existence and attestation of a revelation, then are miracles probable. Of course we do not believe that the Christian miracles would be probable, unless some moral reason could be given for the performance of them. They tend, however, to promote the end of creation, which is the display of the Divine perfections; and it is not strange that the physical universe should be made in every way subservient to the attainment of moral purposes.

The connection of miracles with redemption constitutes no valid objection to it, since the miracles recorded in the New Testament are *true*; so far from being disproved, they are proved by the most positive and conclusive testimony.

The writers of the New Testament are witnesses to the miracles of Christ. We have before us their written depositions. The genuineness and authenticity of their writings have been fully proved by the evidence of contemporaneous writers, and that of the writers of the centuries immediately

succeeding their first publication. If these writings are forgeries, it devolves on the enemies of Christianity to prove that they are such ; failing to do so, we must accept them as genuine and authentic ; the evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of these writings is also positive, clear, and satisfactory.

Many men, having in themselves everything which is necessary to constitute competency in witnesses,—men of high intelligence, of unquestionable honesty, of the greatest sanctity of life,—unite in testifying that they were the spectators of the miracles of Christ,—events of such a nature that they could not be mistaken about them. They sacrifice ease, reputation, life itself, in bearing the testimony referred to. Their testimony, we say, cannot be properly rejected.

The writers of the New Testament not merely testify to the miracles of Christ, but assign a sufficient reason for them. They declare that they were performed for the purpose of attesting a revelation from God, which is necessary to man, and contains the purest moral precepts, the sublimest theological truth, and a plan of salvation for men. The reason which they assign for the performance of the miracles to which they testify certainly adds to their credibility as witnesses to them ; the miracles themselves correspond in grandeur to the redemption which they attest.

The number of witnesses to Christ's miracles appears very large, when we include in it all whom the writers of the New Testament represent and appeal to as spectators of them.

They who testify to the miracles recorded in the New Testament were either deceived themselves or designed to deceive others, if their testimony be not true. They were evidently *not deceived themselves*. That Christ had stilled by a word the winds and the waves,—that He had restored sight to the blind,—that He had fed thousands on a few loaves and little fishes,—that He had raised the dead,—and

that He had himself risen from the dead,—are facts about which these witnesses could not have been mistaken. If the miracles ascribed to Christ were not performed, his apostles were the worst of deceivers. But these apostles evidently had *no design to deceive others* by their testimony. Who that reads the writings of Paul, James, and John can suspect them of willful deception? No writers have ever evinced a greater love of truth, or breathed more fervent desires for the moral elevation of mankind. They could have had no hope of deceiving the Jewish people, and would never have attempted it, by declaring that Christ had performed miracles, the falsehood of which, if they were false, they could have so easily detected. They had nothing earthly to gain, and everything earthly to lose, by the testimony they bore. Who can doubt that they believed that Christ was the Messiah? And this they manifestly believed, because they supposed that He had performed the most stupendous miracles. The labors and sufferings of the apostles of Christ prove beyond a doubt their deep sincerity. Of the veracity of no men who have testified on earth have we as convincing proof. These upright men never retracted their testimony with respect to Christ, never contradicted each other, and died believing that Jesus had risen from the dead. Since they were neither deceived themselves, nor designed to deceive others, their testimony must be received, and our religion must be accepted as true.

It is entirely unreasonable to suppose that, if the miracles of Christ had not been performed, so large a portion of the Jewish nation would have embraced Christianity when it was first proclaimed. It may be said that if these miracles had been performed the whole Jewish nation would have embraced the Christian religion. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Jews who were contemporaneous with Christ and his apostles did not deny his miracles; they destroyed their convincing force by ascribing them to Satanic power. Men indeed may be so prejudiced against

the truth as to resist any amount of evidence that may be adduced in its favor. If the whole Jewish nation had embraced the Christian religion, the evidence of its truth could not be stronger than it is. In that case, the witnesses to the miracles would have had nothing to fear from, or to lose by, bearing their testimony to them, and so their credibility would be weakened ; while there would have been no adversaries to scrutinize the nature of the wonders which Christ performed, or the character of the witnesses who attested them and the nature of their testimony.

Although the argument for Christianity drawn from miracles is conclusive and overwhelming, all that we have desired to prove in this chapter is, that the scriptural account of miracles cannot be urged as an argument against redemption. It is enough for our present purposes to show that the miracles of Christ have not been disproved.

CHAPTER XXIV.

UTILITARIANISM.

It occurs to us that it is necessary to the completion of the plan of this volume to consider the nature of the utilitarian system of philosophy,—its unsoundness and its evil effects. Although some of the most devout and able theologians have embraced it, utilitarianism, especially in its grosser forms, may well be regarded as a real though covert attack on Christianity,—as one of the aspects of modern infidelity ; so unfriendly is it to exalted virtue and piety, so subversive is it of the moral law and all moral distinctions, and so unfavorable is it to a pure creed.

According to the utilitarian system, virtue or morality is founded on utility or a tendency to promote happiness.

Instead of teaching that a particular action promotes happiness because it is right, it is the doctrine of this system that an action is right because it tends to promote the interests of mankind. We shall oppose at this time chiefly that particular form of utilitarianism which is known as the selfish system; according to which men are influenced by self-love alone, or by an exclusive regard to their own happiness: we consider, however, every system that founds virtue on utility as false and pernicious. It is not our intention to discriminate closely between the various utilitarian theories; for widely as Epicurus, Hobbes, Paley, and Bentham may differ from one another, they all have the same starting-point. Paley's moral system is not the less selfish because he introduces into it the idea of immortality; perhaps it deserves a severer condemnation, because the author of it endeavors to unite the sanctions of eternity to a corrupt theory. The utilitarian system of Bentham, in setting forth the "greatest happiness principle," has reference to the whole race, and not to the individual; still it makes happiness the end of all human actions, and even embraces the idea that man is incapable of disinterested benevolence. The ethical theory of Jonathan Edwards, contained in his tract on the Nature of True Virtue, may be regarded as utilitarian, making, as it does, virtue to consist in "benevolence to being in general;" but, as this theory cannot with strict propriety be called selfish, we oppose it no further than to say that it has given countenance to the grosser kinds of utilitarianism. Edwards's tract on virtue is a posthumous publication, and would probably never have been published by the author himself; it certainly has little harmony with the other productions of his pen.

It must be admitted that mankind generally are influenced chiefly by self-love; wicked human nature is greatly selfish. Still, man, according to his original constitution, is not influenced by self-love *alone*; nor did the Almighty

design that he should be : even in his fallen estate he may act from motives of disinterested benevolence. Self-love, when exercised within certain limits, is not, however, worthy of blame ; it is one of the original active principles of the human soul, and the organization of man's moral nature would have been incomplete without it ; it may even be inactive to a criminal degree. It is not denied by us that whatever is right is also expedient or promotive of happiness in the long run ; although it would be perhaps difficult to prove that duty and interest are, *in every possible case*, conjoined. What we object to is the opinion that actions are always right because they are expedient, and that they ought to be performed from no other or higher motive than that of their expediency. As Mackintosh has said : " Man may be so constituted as to approve certain actions without reference to their consequences ; and yet reason may nevertheless discover that a tendency to produce general happiness is the essential characteristic of such actions."

The utilitarian system of philosophy is no novelty, and has been advocated by men of eminent abilities. One of the earliest supporters of it known to us is Aristippus, founder of the Cyrenaic school in Greece, which sect derived its name from Cyrene, in Africa, the native city of its founder. As Enfield has informed us, Aristippus held the following opinions, viz. : that pleasure is the ultimate object of man's pursuit ; that it is only in subserviency to this that fame, friendship, or even virtue is to be desired ; that all crimes are venial, because they are never committed but through the immediate impulse of passion ; that nothing is just or unjust by nature, but by custom and laws ; that the business of philosophers is to regulate the senses in that manner which will render them most productive of pleasure. The most distinguished advocate of the selfish system among the ancients was Epicurus, an Athenian of the Egean tribe. Enfield affirms that the philosophy of Epicurus,

when rescued from the misrepresentation of his adversaries, will be found, for the most part, consonant to reason and nature, and represents him as expressing the following opinions, viz.: "The end of living, or *the ultimate good*, which is to be sought for its own sake, according to the opinion of mankind, *is happiness*; yet men, for the most part, fail in pursuit of the end, either because they do not form a right idea of the nature of happiness, or because they do not make use of proper means to attain it." "Epicurus, it is true, represents pleasure as the ultimate end of living; but pleasure is, in his system, only another name for happiness." The most distinguished advocate of the utilitarian system in modern times was Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury, who was born in the latter part of the sixteenth century. He held that there is nothing simply or absolutely good or evil; but that good and evil are merely relative and conventional. Mackintosh says of him: "Many besides him have really represented *self* as the ultimate object of every action; but none ever so hardly thrust forward the selfish system in its harshest and coarsest shape." Richard Cumberland, Archdeacon Paley, and Jeremy Bentham may be mentioned as distinguished utilitarians.

Many of the most celebrated philosophers, both of ancient and modern times, have regarded virtue as an absolute thing, and have been the advocates of the doctrine of disinterested benevolence. Socrates maintained that happiness is one but not the sole motive to virtue,—that virtue is to be loved for its own sake. Plato has written most beautifully on this subject, affirming that "what is becoming is good; that virtue is to be pursued only for its own sake; and that because it is a Divine attainment it cannot be taught, but is the gift of God." The Stoics, the disciples of Zeno, held that virtue is living agreeably to nature (which is Butler's opinion), and gave great prominence to the moral sentiments in opposition to the selfish

theory. Cicero, a warm opponent of utilitarianism, in a passage in his book "*De Officiis*," says: "Though this be a subject which all philosophers have employed themselves about (for who ever dared to assume the name without laying down instruction about duty?), yet have some sects given such accounts of man's happiness and misery as to destroy the very being of virtue and honesty; for he that makes anything his chiefest good, wherein justice and virtue do not bear a part, and sets up profit, not honesty, for the measure of his happiness, so long as he acts in conformity with his own principles, and is not overruled by the mere dictates of wisdom and humanity, can never do the offices of friendship, justice, or liberality; nor can he be a man of courage that thinks that pain is the greatest evil; or of temperance, who imagines pleasure to be the greatest good. Which things are so plain that one would think they could never stand in need of dispute. These sects therefore, unless they are resolved to be inconsistent with themselves, ought wholly to abstain from speaking anything about virtues; nor indeed can any constant, unalterable, rational rules of them at all be given, unless it be by those who go on this principle,—that it is virtue alone, or at least that chiefly, which ought to be desired for its own sake. So that only the Stoics, Academics, and Peripatetics have a right to lay down rules on this subject." Among modern advocates of the doctrine of disinterested benevolence we find Grotius, Shaftesbury, Cudworth, Fénelon, Hutcheson, and Butler. As Mackintosh has said: "Hume and Smith, as well as Reid, Campbell, and Stewart, have also the merit of having avoided the selfish system, and of having, under whatever variety of representation, alike maintained the disinterested nature of the social affections and the supreme authority of the moral sentiments." It will be discovered on inquiry that the preponderance of authority among philosophers, both ancient and modern, is greatly against the utilitarian theory.

It is reasonable to suppose that as the Deity has designed that man should accomplish various objects, He has endowed him with various passions and affections directed to these different objects; and, if this is so, we must believe that man is not moved by self-love alone. As God designed man to take care of himself and promote his own happiness, He has implanted in the human breast a self-regarding principle. The Deity, however, designed men to promote the welfare of their fellow-men; and we must therefore believe that He has implanted within them a principle of benevolence having direct and ultimate reference to that object. Why should we attempt to resolve one of the principles spoken of into the other? Metaphysicians have only made "confusion worse confounded" by their extreme efforts after simplification, as when they attempt to resolve all the mental faculties into association of ideas, and all the moral affections into self-love; or, rather, by such efforts at simplification they have only obscured and confused what was before sufficiently plain.

The selfish system contradicts our observation of human nature. We know, from what we have ourselves witnessed of mankind, that they are influenced by other passions than self-love. They who, priding themselves on knowing the world, have suffered much from the selfishness of men and have become themselves very regardful of their own interests, often scoff at the idea of disinterested benevolence; but a boasted knowledge of the world it is to be remembered is often very superficial,—a knowledge of the more fashionable and corrupt portion of mankind,—not a knowledge of men generally, not a knowledge of human nature. Every man constantly witnesses exhibitions of other passions than self-love. Men sometimes perform the most cruel and atrocious deeds without any conceivable hope of promoting their interests by them. Butler, in his sermons on human nature (which contain more true moral philosophy than any other uninspired volume), says: "Nothing is more

common than to see men give themselves to a passion or affection, to their known prejudice and ruin, and in direct contradiction to manifest and real interest and the loudest calls of self-love." We have known men who had no clear conviction as to a coming life abandon great temporal advantages for the sake of what they regarded as the right. Is there no disinterested patriotism in the world? Does the mother, when she is making every sacrifice and is willing to die for her child, think only of herself? We cannot regard that purest of natural affections, a mother's love for her offspring, as entirely selfish. It may be said that the Christian loves the right, the patriot loves his country, the parent loves her child, because it is pleasurable to exercise the affections implied. There is, however, often mingled with their exercise a degree of anxiety which renders them no longer sources of enjoyment. Grant that they always impart pleasure; it is the welfare of the objects loved, and not the pleasure that flows from them, that is the motive which impels to the exercise of them. We could derive no pleasure from promoting the happiness of others, if we had not desired their happiness as an ultimate thing before we exerted ourselves in its behalf. It is sometimes affirmed that men do good to others because they have discovered by previous experiment that their beneficence promotes their own enjoyment. The conclusion is not, however, inevitable, that man is exclusively selfish because he has the anticipation of happiness referred to; he may still do good without having reference chiefly to any succeeding pleasure. And here let us ask what prompts men to their first deeds of beneficence. Surely not an expectation of deriving enjoyment from them; for it could not be known previously to all experience whether such deeds would produce pleasure or pain. If a foregoing knowledge of the enjoyment to be derived from it were necessary to the performance of deeds of benevolence, no such deeds would ever be performed; no motive to attempt

them would exist. It cannot be said that the first experiment of doing good is made because some other experimenter has reported that pleasure has been the result of his trial. A child in carrying out its benevolent instincts does not act on any such information or from any calculation whatever. Who told the first benevolent experimenter of the pleasure of doing good? It cannot be supposed that the knowledge to which we allude has been transmitted as a tradition from generation to generation, and that all the generous impulses of childhood come, not from nature, but from calculation and education.

Our personal consciousness contradicts the utilitarian theory as it is commonly received. We know that we ourselves perform many actions from disinterested motives. Every man feels that if he should see a child whom he had never seen before, and whom he expected never to see again, in danger of being run over by a vehicle in some crowded thoroughfare, he would rush to the rescue of that child if he could do so without endangering himself. The worst men sometimes, under the impulse of conscience, do right for the mere sake of doing right, and when all thought of outward reward, and even of the pleasures of an approving conscience, is absent from their minds.

Conscience teaches us that it is not virtuous to act from an exclusive regard to our own interests. Consult the monitor within you, and from the oracle in the sanctuary of our humanity you will receive the speedy and emphatic response that it is ignoble in man, the subject of an infinitely good Governor, and the citizen of an immense commonwealth, to live as though he were an isolated being, indifferent to the happiness of others except as it promotes his own, and regarding the Divinity himself as existing only for his convenience and enjoyment. We approve of ourselves most when we make sacrifices for the good of others; and when we have done an act of beneficence from mere selfish considerations, we have no complacent emo-

tions of conscience on account of it. The moment we suspect ourselves of selfish intentions in having done good to others when we have received credit for benevolence, that moment we lose our self-respect, which would not be the case if conscience did not teach us that we might and ought to have acted from disinterested motives.

That man is capable of being moved by motives of disinterested benevolence is evident from the feelings with which we regard the actions of others as to their disinterestedness or selfishness. Those deeds which have been performed under the influence of self-love have ever failed to secure our highest approbation and applause; these are the deeds which men have been least likely to perpetuate in history and in song. It is when a man forgets himself, rises above his personal interest, sacrifices his rights; it is when he sublimely suffers, and not when he enjoys, that he becomes an object of moral grandeur, and assumes a position among the truest heroes of the world. So we admire Codrus; so we admire Regulus; so we give honor to the suffering patriot, Hampden; so we enshrine in our unceasing admiration the consecrated martyr. We are all accustomed to regard selfishness as a sordid thing, as rarely leading to sublime achievements, and as ever failing to awaken in the breast of man the purest and noblest sentiments that he is capable of cherishing. A man performs before us an act of splendid beneficence; we admire the act and applaud the man. Why? On account of his supposed generosity. We discover afterwards, however, that the act was prompted by selfishness, and we no longer admire the man, and scarcely approve the act. Would this change of feeling occur if men were necessarily selfish in all their beneficent acts? If they are so, beneficence is unworthy of admiration as a virtue. If all the acts which men do towards others are prompted by selfishness, since men do not admire selfish deeds, there are no good works of man to be admired,—none at least that he does for

the welfare of others. Or if, on the other hand, selfishness is at the bottom of everything, we ought not to admire deeds the less because the motives to them are interested, and we ought to love those most who do us most good, however selfish their motives with respect to us.

The theory that happiness is the foundation of virtue (not only the grosser utilitarianism, but even that of Edwards, as unfolded in his book on Virtue) is false, because it is founded on and implies false notions of the Deity; for that which has a false basis must be itself false. It is because men regard the Deity as exclusively benevolent that they imagine that mankind were made so as to act solely with a view to their happiness. God is, however, just as well as benevolent, and has therefore made the right as much the object of man's ultimate pursuit as the useful; and, if this be so, the desire of happiness cannot be the chief, much less the sole, moving power of human action. "Perhaps," says Butler, "an infinitely perfect mind may be pleased with seeing his creatures behave suitably with the nature which He has given them, to the relations in which He has placed them to each other, and to that in which they stand to Himself; that relation to Himself which, during their existence, is ever necessary, and which is the most important one of all. I say, an infinitely perfect mind may be pleased with the moral piety of moral agents *in and of itself*, as well as upon account of its being essentially conducive to the happiness of his creation; or the whole end for which God made and thus governs the world may be utterly beyond the reach of our faculties. There may be somewhat in it as impossible for us to have any conception of as for a blind man to have a conception of color." Butler says again: "Some men seem to think the only character of the Author of nature to be that of single, absolute benevolence. This, considered as a principle of action, and infinite in degree, is a disposition to produce the greatest

possible happiness without regard to persons' behavior, otherwise than as such regard would produce the highest degree of it. And supposing this to be the only character of God, veracity and justice in Him would be nothing but benevolence conducted by wisdom. Now, surely this *ought not to be asserted* unless it can be *proved*; for we should speak with cautious reverence on such a subject. There may possibly be creatures in the universe to whom the Author of nature manifests Himself under this most amiable of all characters, this of infinite, absolute benevolence, but He manifests Himself to us under the character of a righteous governor." The truth is that man, according to his original constitution, was made in the image of his Maker, which image he ought to retain; and as God is benevolent, so ought man to be; and as God has a regard to the right for its own sake, so ought man to have. The theory we oppose also evidently falsifies the character of God, since it makes his holiness result from his happiness, instead of making his happiness flow out from his holiness.

The utilitarian system involves a self-contradiction. It denies that there is any other foundation of moral obligation than utility, and at the same time implies that there is some other. For the question recurs, Why ought men to do what is useful? and the answer must be, either because it is right in itself, or because it is the will of God, or because it is in accordance with the character of God; and either of these answers implies some other anterior and superior ground of moral obligation. This system inverts the natural order of things in making happiness the cause instead of the effect of virtue. The opinion that man is happy because he is virtuous commends itself to our reason; but conscience and reason alike revolt at the thought that a man is virtuous because he enjoys himself: if it were so, a bacchanalian scene might be regarded as an exhibition of elevated virtue. If a tendency to promote

enjoyment invests an object with virtue, many of the actions which we have been accustomed to consider indifferent would become positively virtuous ; in that case, good cooking would be a high act of morality, and a good cook, from the very nature of his occupation, would be a highly virtuous man.

We now proceed, by showing the effects of the utilitarian system, to point out the way in which it has proved itself inimical to Christianity and favorable to unbelief. It will appear that in discussing this subject we have not turned aside from the path that we had prescribed to ourselves, and that in attacking utilitarianism, or at least the grosser forms of it, we are only assailing infidelity itself.

In saying that the utilitarian system is unfavorable to Christianity, we do not mean that it produces any very serious effect on every one of its professed advocates. Men of the purest benevolence have, sometimes, embraced it; men who are accustomed to listen to the dictates of conscience have been known to regard all proper moral action as the result of cold calculations of expediency. It often happens that a man is better than his theory. Some persons advocate, with their lips, systems to which their understandings refuse a full assent ; while others regard as conclusive the arguments adduced in favor of systems to which they never yield the credence of the heart. We are only speaking of the tendency and general influence of the corrupt theory which we are examining. It is sometimes necessary to watch the operation of a philosophic system over a wide area and through a long duration, before we can satisfactorily determine its character by its effects.

The utilitarian system is unfriendly to Christianity, because it tends to produce *heretical opinions with respect to revealed truth*, it tends to a perversion of the holy oracles.

It produces erroneous views of the Divine nature. Originating in part from wrong conceptions of God, it confirms them. Let a man believe that happiness is the foundation

of virtue, he will resolve all the Divine attributes into the one attribute of benevolence ; and thus he will deny to God the attribute of justice, or assign it a very inferior position in the Divine character.

He who believes that man ought to act exclusively with reference to happiness is likely to believe that the Deity himself ought so to act. He may be puzzled at the human wretchedness of which he is the spectator ; but, unable to dispose of that difficulty, he flies to the future for relief, and affirms that all men will be completely happy in eternity. His theory urges him to a denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment. If, indeed, we believe that God is solely benevolent, if we deny to Him justice as a primary and fundamental attribute, it is difficult for us to accept the idea of future and everlasting retribution.

Some theologians who have embraced the utilitarian system have found it necessary, that they might reconcile their theory with the doctrine of eternal punishment, to limit the power of the Deity. Finding sin, and misery as its inevitable consequence, to exist, they have affirmed that sin exists because it is "necessarily incidental to the best system of moral government ;" they have affirmed that it is impossible for God to prevent the existence of sin and its everlasting consequences, without doing violence to the moral agency of man. Their reasoning is, that if utility be the foundation of moral obligation in man, it is so also in God ; and if Divine regard for utility admits of sin and suffering and hell, it does so only because God cannot prevent them while man remains free. Thus (in theory) the Divine omnipotence is denied, and the human will is rendered independent of the Almighty ; thus God is dethroned. We know that the utilitarian theory has, as a matter of fact, been generally found in alliance with the opinion that sin is an incidental evil which God cannot infallibly prevent. Leibnitz himself furnishes, in his theology and philosophy, an example of this connection. We believe that the philo-

sophic and the theological opinions alluded to are the correlatives of each other, or that the former is the natural basis of the latter.

Utilitarians, because their theory aims a blow at the Divine justice, form also erroneous ideas concerning the atonement. They are not apt to regard the sufferings of Christ as a real satisfaction to Divine justice, and as a real penalty paid to the Divine law; on the contrary, they are liable to regard those sufferings as merely dramatic, or, at most, as something which merely takes the place and is accepted in lieu of penal sufferings. We are confident that, although many of the advocates of the utilitarian system have been orthodox with respect to the atonement, the system itself has a tendency to produce heresy on this important subject.

Utilitarians try all the scriptural doctrines by their rule of expediency, and are tempted to deny any one of them that does not correspond with it.

It requires no argument to show that there may be such a denial of the doctrines of revelation as amounts to a rejection of Christianity as a system; it must also be admitted that all heresy has a tendency to infidelity, although it may not actually reach it; and we are justified in concluding that utilitarianism is inimical to the Christian religion, because we know, from the reason of the case, and from experience alike, that it has an inherent tendency to engender and nurture extreme and flagrant heresies.

The utilitarian theory is at war with Christianity, because it is in conflict with the scriptural command *to love the Supreme Being supremely* and for his own sake. How can we love the Lord our God with all our mind, soul, and strength, if self-love is the sole motive power to all our actions? Had not the command referred to been so explicitly given by revelation, our reason would have taught us that the Creator has implanted in the breasts of men some principle or affection designed to terminate on Him-

self. It is impossible that men should love God supremely merely for the purpose of securing their own interests ; for we must first love God before we can desire to enjoy Him as our highest happiness.

Utilitarianism has a tendency to *prevent the cultivation of the nobler virtues, and to produce corrupt ethical rules and vicious habits and practices.*

The selfish system is adapted to awaken no lofty patriotism, no far-reaching philanthropy, no spirit of self-sacrifice, no noble moral heroism. At best it only fosters the prosaic virtue of prudence, since it confines a man's attention exclusively to himself. It is said, however, that the kind of utilitarianism which recommends love to being in general, and makes the general happiness the rule of action, is eminently favorable to the cultivation of philanthropic feeling. So far is this from being true, experience has proved that it has the contrary effect. It is a significant fact that the infidels of France whose moral influence was so disastrous, whose principles led to so much cruelty and crime, were the active advocates of the last-named species of utilitarianism. By referring every question of morality solely to the understanding, they undermined the principles of virtue and palsied those powerful motives to it which come from the conscience and the heart. They were induced by their theory to neglect the culture of those private affections which are the indispensable basis of a regard for the public good. Mere calculations of expediency in morals prevent the action of those internal sentiments whose free operation is necessary to the formation of eminent virtue.

The philosophers of the utilitarian school have generally adopted loose and defective rules for the guidance of human conduct. Of this the celebrated Paley furnishes an example in what he has taught in regard to the Christian sabbath and religious tests ; and especially when he says that it is lawful to utter a falsehood to any man who has no right to know the truth from us. No one but a utilitarian would

have given a precept so immoral as the last referred to: yet we doubt not the excellence of Dr. Paley as a man, in whatever light he ought to be viewed as a moral philosopher.

It is easy to trace the practical influence of the corrupt philosophy we are opposing. It rarely fails to conduct multitudes who adopt it into the grossest sensuality. The followers of Epicurus in ancient times, although he himself was virtuous, were grossly licentious. Julius Cæsar, a man of depraved moral habits, was an Epicurean; so was the luxurious parasite Atticus. The disciples of the school of Epicurus adopted the motto, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry; for to-morrow we die." In ancient Greece and Rome the word Epicurean became synonymous with sensualist; and doubtless in the present day it may be discovered that the licentious generally are disciples of the school of Epicurus. When men are taught that they have a right to pursue happiness as their ultimate end, many, finding their happiness in sensuality, will abandon themselves to the gratification of the lowest passions and appetites of their nature.

Even when the adoption of the utilitarian theory does not produce gross sensuality, its usual result is a spirit of complete worldliness. It is apt to produce coarse materialism and hard secularism. It crushes out poetic emotion and lofty sentiment. It is emphatically "of the earth, earthy." The mind intent solely on its own interests uses the means of self-advancement that lie nearest to it and are obvious to the senses, and thus becomes devoted entirely to material agencies and ends. This theory fosters that avarice which debases the soul and ties it down to the dust, that avarice which has been the great sin of our country and which threatens us with temporal ruin. It may encourage agriculture and commerce; it may promote the progress of the mechanic arts; it may multiply the means and appliances of material enjoyment: but it will never make a people really great or truly happy; for it can never produce

exquisite taste, pure sentiment, or lofty virtue. Under its influence religion itself is valued not because it is true, not because it is right, not because God has enjoined it, not even because it may save men from eternal perdition, but simply on account of the national or some other temporal benefits it is supposed to confer.

Utilitarianism in its best form, by directing the attention more to outward acts than to inward motives, almost necessarily forms a superficial moral character. It renders a man satisfied with his exterior, and thus engenders hypocrisy. It is almost incompatible with deep devotion and the earnest contemplation of sacred things. It produces piety of that sort which is active at anniversaries and on other great public occasions, but which lags and languishes in the closet and at home. It leads to the adoption of machinery and schemes of trickery in the advancement of religion, which disgust men of discernment and high principle. Robust moral and religious character must be formed by some other theory.

It must be manifest that a system which fails to foster the noblest virtues, which leads to the adoption of defective moral rules, and which conducts to vicious practices, must be inimical to that Christianity whose chief and ultimate end is the sanctification of human nature. Besides, that moral system which leads men to vice, which makes them actually vicious, or even leaves in dormancy the best sentiments and affections of their souls, must, if adopted, incline them to infidelity.

Utilitarianism tends, by its logical results, to *the utter subversion of morality*. It substitutes the expedient for the right; so that the existence of the right is altogether ignored and overlooked. It fails to regard virtue as a definite and immutable thing; for if an action be virtuous only because it tends to the promotion of happiness, practically its moral character is entirely determined by the motive of the agent himself, and thus virtue itself ceases to be an objective

reality, and the obligation to perform it depends solely on the uncertain and fitful mental state of the agent, instead of having, as it ought to have, an independent, an immutable, and an eternal basis. Virtue, if not absolute, is neither permanent nor real. Utilitarians are apt to, if they do not necessarily, lose sight of all moral distinctions. It is well known that they deny the existence of *conscience* as an original and independent faculty, thus dethroning the arbiter of moral questions. It is apparent that if moral distinctions are annihilated the moral law is also subverted. Utilitarianism does practically substitute the mere dictates of the understanding and ideas of expediency for the moral law. Robert Hall, speaking of the demoralizing effect of the utilitarian philosophy, says: "Its seeds were sown with an unsparing hand in France, a congenial soil, where they produced a thick vegetation. The consequences were soon felt. The fabric of society tottered to its base, the earth shook under their feet; the heavens were involved in darkness, and a voice more audible than thunder called on them to desist. But unmoved amid the uproar of elements, undismayed by that voice which astonishes nature and appalls the guilty, these men continued absorbed in their calculations. Instead of revering the judgments or confessing the finger of God, they only made haste (still on the principle of expediency) to desolate his works and destroy his image, as if they were apprehensive the shades of a premature night might fall and cover their victims."

That system which, besides checking the growth of every virtue and giving encouragement to every vice, destroys also all moral distinctions and subverts the moral law, must be regarded as, in its tendencies at least, destructive of Christianity. To destroy the moral law is to upturn the very foundation of the gospel, so that it is ruined in the crash.

The adoption of the utilitarian system *has directly led some men to a rejection of the Christian religion.* They

reason thus : virtue is founded in utility ; but what is useful in the long run cannot be ascertained by man's feeble, finite, and fallible powers ; therefore virtue cannot be known and attained. The conclusion at which they arrive is, that as virtue is impossible, so is religion.

If Christianity should be generally embraced, and exert its due and designed moral influence, false philosophy must be disproved and discarded. Luther effected a reformation with respect to the doctrine of justification : the Puritans of England and the Presbyterians of Scotland effected a reformation with respect to the sabbath : it is necessary now, at least in our own country, that some one should arise who will effect a reformation with respect to the moral law ; who will teach men the true foundation of virtue, the everlasting nature of moral obligation, and the true meaning of the statutes of Sinai and the moral precepts of Christ. If we would possess a pure Christianity, our countrymen must be taught to be governed by principle, and not by mere expediency ; utilitarianism must be banished from the land, and that philosophy which the Scriptures teach and approve must take its place. Understanding the moral law, we may hope to understand the gospel. Guided by principle and in pursuit of what is absolutely right, we may hope to be conducted to the cross of Christ, to renounce a spirit criminally selfish, to hold in due subordination whatever is material and secular, to aspire after the unseen and spiritual, and to attain a genuine holiness of heart, without which all our philosophy and all our knowledge of Christianity will avail us little. Under the dominion of the whole truth of revelation, our lives will be useful and at least comparatively happy, our natures will be purified and perfected, our future bliss will be immortal, the God in whose hands our breath is will be glorified, the Saviour who has redeemed us will be admired in our history and in our character.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FUTURE OF REDEMPTION.

LET us permit our thoughts to dwell for a while on the future of redemption in the world. The gospel promises a happy and glorious future to the human race.

We must turn to the Scriptures, "the sure word of prophecy," to ascertain with certainty and satisfaction what influence Christianity is destined to exert on the world in coming ages. Men may imagine and conjecture with respect to the future; but God only absolutely foreknows and can infallibly foretell it. It is gratifying to be assured that the inspired word has, graphically and with great minuteness, depicted the future successes of the gospel.

Never did poetry present to the human soul a lovelier vision than that which prophecy affords when it depicts the coming glories of the Redeemer's kingdom. It is delightful to remember Eden; it is still more delightful to anticipate the millennium. Every variety of glowing oriental imagery is used by inspired writers to describe the purity, the peacefulness, and the blessedness of Messiah's reign when He shall be fully recognized as the king of nations. It is deeply consoling to look away from the present miseries and disorders of the world, and from the present imperfections of the visible church, and revel in the prospect of a world purified, rectified, and made happy, and of a church which will reflect every line and lineament of the beautiful and spotless character of its Saviour.

The prophecies of the Scriptures that relate to the future effects of the gospel are adapted to remove skepticism and increase confidence with respect to the inspiration of the

sacred volume : they indicate in their nature, apart from any consideration of their fulfillment, their origin from that God who knows the end from the beginning. Notwithstanding all that Christianity has effected for the weal of man, some are ready to make objection to it because it has effected so little : we point such persons to the pages of prophecy and to the future ; we tell them that the gospel has hitherto only been opening the way for its great success ; that its most beneficent effects are to be felt by succeeding generations of mankind ; that all its past benefits are only as the scattered drops which precede, in their fall, the abundant shower. The very existence of these scriptural promises of the success of the gospel presents to our minds a positive argument for its truth ; for that religion is surely sincere, and is conscious of being armed with superhuman strength, which so confidently predicts for itself so signal a triumph over all other religions, over all earthly institutions, and over all human hearts.

The gospel is destined not merely to survive in the world, despite the number, power, and malice of its enemies, but to make advances and win new trophies in each succeeding age. It has been advancing for eighteen centuries. The stream of grace has seemed to be dried up in some lands which it once watered, but has still flowed on, and has only been diverted into new channels, along which it has had a freer flow. Firmly seated as Mohammedanism is, it is its fate to fall at the sound of the evangelic trumpet : the days of the reign of papacy, "the man of sin," are appointed, and that gigantic system of imposture and superstition will, as prophecy assures us, give way before the influence of sacred truth. The gospel will be diffused gradually and constantly among the heathen ; every new generation of men will witness its fresh triumphs in the world of paganism. Prophecy has said of the church of Christ : "The gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see : all they

gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the gentiles shall come unto thee."

Divine prophecy plainly teaches that the knowledge and love of the gospel will be universal, that Christianity will become the religion of the world. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." God is represented by the prophet Isaiah as saying, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Daniel says: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Every temple in which the rites of Romanism have been performed, every mosque in which the inspiration of the false prophet has been acknowledged, every pagoda and every synagogue, will become a temple in which the Son of God shall receive adoration. On the hill-top, on the hill-side, in the lonely vale, and by the side of gentle water-courses and embosomed in the greenwood, in many spots of rural beauty, and in every city and village and hamlet round the circuit of the globe, will stand the churches, which, dedicated to the Triune Jehovah, shall be honored by the presence of his truth and Spirit. The sabbath will spread its sweet light over those lands which are now covered with the gross darkness of heathenism; and all those Christian hopes will be cherished and all those Christian virtues will be practiced among the most benighted and degraded nations, that hitherto have

been known only among the most enlightened and happy.

The millennium, during which the religion of Christ shall be triumphant over all lands, will be an era of blessedness unparalleled in previous periods of the world's history, such as the human imagination can scarcely picture, and the Christian heart longs and prays for in its moments of most fervid benevolence and most rapt devotion. During the period of the church's glory in the world, the earth will probably resemble heaven as much as it will resemble the earth as it now exists: it will be thoroughly revolutionized and renovated in its moral aspects, and become invested with an almost celestial loveliness. It is foretold that at this period "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." In the eloquent language of Robert Hall, "It will be a period of remarkable illumination, during which the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as that of seven days. Every useful talent will be cultivated, every art subservient to the interests of man improved and perfected; learning will amass her stores, and genius emit her splendor, but the former will be displayed without ostentation, and the latter shine with the softened effulgence of humility and love." The millennium will also be a period of great holiness on earth: then piety will be not only everywhere diffused, but more profound, more earnest, and more active, than it has ever yet been witnessed in the world. The spirit of Christ's apostles will then pervade the entire church, and men will no longer speak of primitive piety, but of that which shall then exist, as of the purest and most ardent character: if any insincerity shall exist in the millennial church, the number of the insincere will bear no comparison with that of the truly regenerate, in accordance with the inspired prophecy, "Thy people also shall be all righteous." What blessed sabbaths, what sacred sacramental seasons, shall then be enjoyed! with what words of thrilling and

almost inspired eloquence the gospel will then be preached! every sanctuary will be crowded with holy worshipers; in every family the altar of praise and prayer will be raised; and every household will be soundly instructed in the things of Christ's kingdom and imbued richly with the spirit of the Saviour's love. Music of the sweetest sort, praise the noblest and purest, protracted and universal in its exquisite melody, like that of the morning stars when they sang together at the creation of the world, will ascend to heaven from every quarter of this redeemed and regenerated sphere.

By means of human art and industry during the millennium, the physical aspects of the world will be greatly improved; sterility will be removed from every soil, and abundant harvests will crown every land. Nations will live in perfect amity with one another; either no national differences will exist, or the bloody arbiter will no longer be resorted to for the settlement of them: nations shall not "learn war any more." As the natural result of this national amity, commerce will flourish to the utmost extent, and the agricultural products of each nation will be communicated to every other. Storms may have gathered round the morning of the world, and tempests may darken its mid-day; but its evening will be placid and bright as a fine summer evening in a temperate clime, when the winds are gentle, balmy, and sweet, and the sky overhead has a cerulean purity, and the king of day, serenely curtained and canopied with golden splendor, pours a mellow and benignant effulgence over grassy plains and green forests, over flocks on the hill-sides, and over well-constructed habitations, the homes of human affection and bliss. How long shall this happy condition of things continue? The Scriptures say a thousand years. Some suppose that each day of this thousand years stands for a year of our time; and according to this mode of reckoning the millennium will last three hundred and sixty thousand years.

We have seen what prophecy teaches with respect to the future history of redemption. From the present condition of the world, and from the past history and present influence of the gospel, we may conclude, without the aid of Divine prophecy, that Christianity will become universally known and prevalent, and that it will promote vastly the intellectual, moral, and social improvement, and in every way the happiness, of the nations of the earth. We wish to derive from the probable future progress and success of the gospel an argument for the truth of redemption. Let it be distinctly understood that this argument is not based on Divine prophecy, but is derived from observation and reason. Let no one object that, after we have presented so many positive and conclusive arguments in favor of the Divine origin of redemption, an argument is now suggested which is only probable: our general argument is cumulative, and is strengthened by every additional probability which can be adduced in favor of the truth and Divinity of the gospel.

It is strongly probable that Christianity will become the universal religion: the probability here indicated arises from a variety of considerations, which singly may not produce any deep conviction, but which combined may have great force.

The blessings which God has long bestowed and continues to bestow on the human race lead us to believe that it shall continue to receive Divine favors, and that it may receive greater Divine favors than have at any past period been bestowed upon it. If there were no evidence of progress in the world, still the history of God's benefactions to mankind, as they are learned even apart from revelation, ought to forbid us to despair as to the future happiness of the race. Besides, there is evidence of man's progress at least in the acquisition of much that is valuable; and the opinion is almost universal, and on that account must be regarded as having some foundation in reason, that a better

condition of things awaits the world. There has been progress in both the useful and the ornamental arts, in science, in practical agriculture, in commerce, and in government. The inventions and discoveries of one age are transmitted to all succeeding ages, and the art of printing not only preserves, but diffuses more and more widely, all valuable literature. Macaulay has shown that the English nation has been gradually improving in its character and resources for two hundred years; and although some nations have declined, while others have increased, in excellence and prosperity during recent centuries, it has been long since discovered that each generation of mankind makes advances in intelligence and wealth beyond its predecessor. If it is the destiny of mankind to make progress in knowledge and in material comfort, it is reasonable to suppose that they will also improve in moral character: history and observation show that the moral improvement of the race has been as constant and great as the intellectual and material. It is also certain that the world has been indebted for its progress chiefly to the influence of the Christian religion, which promotes alike the material, the intellectual, and the moral welfare of mankind. We are compelled to believe in the progress or increasing and continued improvement of mankind, until the world shall become a scene of purity and happiness; we are compelled also to believe in the general extension and universal prevalence of Christianity, since that religion alone is adequate to produce the mighty and beneficent changes which it is the destiny of the world to experience. As the general belief of men in a past golden age points back to paradise, so the general belief of men as to the coming of a happier day for the human race points forward to the millennium, or the period when the gospel of Christ will universally prevail.

Our belief that the gospel will become universally triumphant is founded in part on the expectations of all Christians with respect to it. It is the aim and effort of

the Christian church to extend itself to all lands. Missionaries of the cross are being multiplied in all countries, and are everywhere enrolling converts to the faith they proclaim. Christianity is the only religion which men are diligently and zealously seeking to propagate by moral means; and since efforts are making to win for it votaries in all lands, we confidently predict for it wide success.

We are accustomed (and with propriety) to judge the future from the past, and we are to consider that the religion whose victories are predicted is that religion which, taking its rise as a rivulet in Palestine, soon swelled itself into a mighty river, bearing down superstitions, philosophies, and political power, in its rapid and resistless course. The religion which, going from the cross, ascended the throne of the Cæsars, and which diffused its influence through the wide world, retaining its original purity and reassuming its primal vigor, may well be expected to make manifestations of an irresistible power. That it has survived through so much opposition, treachery, and corruption, proves that it has within it some immortal element of success. The most beneficent of all religions, the best adapted to the conscious wants of human nature, even reason cries out that it must ultimately succeed.

Every man, as we have already intimated, expects the unchristianized nations to advance in knowledge, and they must, as they become intelligent, perceive the inferiority of their religious systems as they shall be brought into comparison with Christianity. Our religion has always kept in advance of man's developing faculties and the progress of human science; other religions must fall behind these, and they must sink before advancing knowledge, because they are at war with it. The only alternatives left to the nations will be atheism and the Christian religion, and the instinctive religious feelings of men will lead them to the choice of the latter.

The increasing power of Christian nations and their

acknowledged superiority in all that constitutes civilization will probably give to the Christian religion a respectability in the estimation of the nations which commerce is opening to intercourse with Christians, which will induce them first to investigate and then to embrace it. The Protestant nations are the most successful colonists, and Christianity is probably destined, by means of colonization alone, to prevail widely throughout the world.

Let it not be supposed that the gospel can become triumphant unless accompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit, to which it owes all its past success; but it is probable that the same Divine influences which have hitherto attended it will accompany it to the ends of the earth.

It is probable, without the light of prophecy, that the universal spread of the gospel will produce the most beneficent effects on the family of man. Wherever Christianity shall go, civilization will follow in its wake. Knowledge, courtesy, charity, every virtue, will be diffused, and men will become happy in proportion to the improvement of their intellectual and moral natures. It is probable that as the number of Christians on the earth shall increase, they will advance the knowledge and stimulate the piety of each other to an unprecedented degree, and thus all the institutions of Christian beneficence will be more numerous and more flourishing round the earth. It is probable that a greater facility of commercial intercourse will exist among nations professing the same faith, and that from this increase of commercial intercourse will result a general amity among mankind, so that the sheathed sword and the silent war-trumpet will be hung up in the temple of God, and nations will not learn war any more.

Few will deny that the universal religion will be the true one. If Christianity should become universally prevalent, and if it should confer on the nations of the earth all the blessings which prophecy promises as the result of its

universal extension, there will be none to doubt its power and excellence or to dispute its Divine origin. It is probable that it will become universal, and that it will spread universal beneficence of the highest order. The Divinity of its origin is therefore probable.

Let us here say that the Christian church derives great benefit from engaging successfully in the evangelization of the world. The more clear and decided the evidences of their religion become, the more sustaining and consoling that religion becomes to Christians; and the more widely redemption is known and prevails, the greater becomes its power to attest itself, and the more abundant the evidence of its truth. Christianity has already proved itself to be of God, by overcoming barriers which no human power could surpass, and by imparting to men and nations such social and personal enjoyment as no earthly philosophy, no human legislation, no means that man's wisdom could devise or his skill employ, could ever have bestowed. But the power of redemption to attest itself, great as it is, may be greatly augmented. Every new conversion of a sinner, every new life distinguished by piety, every moral revolution of a neighborhood or nation, every genuine revival of religion, furnishes a more effective argument for the credibility of our religion than the reasoning of our profoundest divines. Send abroad your evangelical missionaries; and as you witness the destruction of ancient superstitions, the diffusion of pure morals, the intellectual improvement and spiritual advancement of once degraded nations, accomplished through the instrumentality of the published gospel, you will yourselves become more powerfully convinced that redemption is Divine; and these results of the published gospel will attest its Divinity to many minds hitherto skeptical as to its truth,—will indeed give a death-blow to all skepticism in lands nominally Christian.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OBJECTIONS TO THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES
CONSIDERED.—(*Note.*)

It was affirmed at the outset of this discussion that the Divinity of redemption being admitted or proved, the inspiration of the volume that has revealed it stands as a corollary. It is certain at least that the truth of redemption being established, it is no difficult task to prove that the Scriptures are inspired.

It is a common method to make an argument for the truth of revelation, and from that established truth to conclude that redemption is true. We reverse this order of reasoning for the present. We prove first that redemption attests its own Divine origin, and from the proved Divinity of redemption we conclude that the Scriptures which have promulged it to mankind have been produced through the inspiration of the Almighty. It has been argued often by the friends of Christianity that the existence of the moral law proves the inspiration of the Scriptures; and the soundness of the argument referred to cannot be questioned. We say also that the inspiration of the Bible is sufficiently proved by this fact alone, that it first unfolded to men that scheme of salvation which is so necessary to man; which so harmonizes with all nature; which so illustrates the perfections and the law of God; which so corresponds to the condition of man and throws so much light on his moral character; and which has displayed such superhuman power and produced such beneficent effects in the world.

Some may deem it a matter of small importance, if

redemption is proved, whether the inspiration of the Scriptures be admitted or denied. Truly, God has revealed to us no truth which in value can bear a comparison to this. It is important to us, however, not to reject the authority of God with respect to any subject on which He has chosen to furnish it to us, and many things have been revealed to us in the holy oracles besides redemption, which, if recognized as coming from God, may greatly promote alike our temporal and spiritual welfare; while it is also true that if we should undertake to separate the plan of salvation from the rest of Divine revelation as worthy alone of our entire confidence, we might overlook or reject some necessary and fundamental part of that plan itself.

The scheme of salvation is objectively revealed in God's written word. There it stands inscribed as with a sunbeam, legible to all the generations of mankind. It was as plainly visible to the Christians of the apostolic age as it is to the church of the present day; it was understood and received by the first Christians in the same sense in which it is understood and received by us. For eighteen centuries it has been interpreted in the same manner by multitudes of men. Literature may advance, and science may make new attainments; but in all the revolutions of ages and the mutations of earthly affairs, this scheme remains the same, receiving no addition, submitting to no diminution. The revelation of it, or the statement made of it on Divine authority, is as perfect as the scheme itself. The providences of God do indeed often illustrate his revelation, but the scheme of redemption can be developed in no other sense than that the application of it, in the lapse of ages, impresses the mind more deeply with its truth and importance and renders more visible its provisions and parts. It cannot properly be a different thing, to the present or to any future generation of mankind, from what it was properly to the men who first received it, or to the Christians of the third or the reformers of the sixteenth century. Subsequent

history only throws light on it, just as it illumines, while it changes not, any fact which comes to us from the hills of antiquity. If redemption has been objectively revealed, we find no difficulty in believing that the whole Bible is a complete objective revelation from God.

Before proceeding to show in what manner the truth of redemption proves the inspiration of the Scriptures, we shall show that an objective Divine revelation perfect in itself is not an impossible thing. In doing so we are aware that, so far as most of our readers are concerned, we are accomplishing an unnecessary task. It is certainly astonishing that any man of learning or talent should have denied the possibility of God's giving to man a written revelation. It is presumed, however, that Morell's theory of inspiration is known to most of our readers, and on some of them it may have exerted a pernicious influence.

According to Morell's theory, the reason, which he calls the intuitional consciousness, is, in accordance with the method of the transcendental German writers, distinguished from the understanding, and inspiration can exist only in the intuitional consciousness. Morell says that "inspiration depends upon the clearness, force, and accuracy of a man's religious intentions;" that "it is a higher potency of a certain form of consciousness which every man to some degree possesses." As merely an elevation of the intuitional faculty for the reception of truth, he holds that inspiration has no connection with the other faculties of the human mind. He denies that Divine Providence watched over the composition of the Scriptures in any other sense than it watches over every other human event. He believes that holy men at the present day are inspired in the same sense in which the apostles were. He considers that an outward revelation "can neither give any certitude nor guard against any errors which an accurate thinker could not detect for himself." Still, the author of the theory of intuitional consciousness does not wish to be numbered

among the enemies of Christianity, which he regards as the "religion which rests upon the consciousness of *the redemption of the world through Jesus Christ*," and "as the sole appointed means of human recovery." Whatever else Morell, however, may admit or believe, he certainly denies both the fact and the possibility of the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

If it had been simply affirmed that the whole of the Divine revelation cannot be understood without the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit in the soul, we would have no controversy with the writer whose theory we are considering. The truths of salvation in their amplitude and consistency are only spiritually discerned, or are only perceived through a direct Divine influence on the soul. But this is not what Morell means when he denies the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is to be borne in mind that a book may be objectively perfect and fully inspired even when wholly unintelligible without the aids of the Holy Spirit. If it had been said merely that the inspired word is better understood by some classes of minds than by others, we would not object to the statement. Any book, however true a transcript of the mind of its author, may be understood in different degrees by men of different natural capacities. Nor do we object to the opinion that Providence may so illustrate revelation in the lapse of ages, that the latter may be better understood at some future day than it ever has been: such an opinion does not conflict with the theory of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. The Bible is a book which will be the better understood the longer it is studied.

We do not assent to the assertion that God cannot give an objective revelation to man. The *onus probandi* rests on him who makes it. We affirm that God may give to the world a written volume, containing religious truth without any admixture of error, and addressed to all man's intellectual and moral nature. A man may make a book

which faithfully discloses his thoughts on any given subject, and address it to the thoughts and feelings of his fellow-men. A man may employ another man as his amanuensis in writing down his thoughts and wishes so as to make them intelligible to others. Why then may not God make known his ideas, will, and purposes through the medium of a book, even if He employs an amanuensis in writing it? God has given to man an *objective* revelation through material nature. Can it be denied that the heavens declare the glory of God?—that the existence and many of the perfections of the Deity are made known through the workmanship of his hands? It is not necessary to inquire whether the manifestations of God that are made in creation and providence address the reason or the understanding, or both. They are a Divine revelation, and if God can make one objective revelation He can make another. If He can make stars and flowers and stones the hieroglyphics which make known his perfections, He can employ the letters which men are accustomed to use, in accomplishing the same purpose. No man can say that error is necessarily mingled with the religious revelation which nature makes, nor is error necessarily mingled with the revelation which is given in God's written word.

It is exceedingly probable that God would give in writing any new revelation which He designed for man. Books have been the most effective and the indispensable means for the elevation and improvement of the human race; without their influence man would never have emerged from a condition of barbarism, and without their influence he would revert to it.

An objective revelation is necessary to mankind. God might indeed inspire every man as He did the apostle Paul; but the inspiration required must be something more than a mere brightening of the intuitional faculty; something must be brought from without; the *fact* that an *atonement* has been made is an indispensable revelation, as Morell

admits, and that fact could never be made known by any mere elevation of the reason. Whether made known to the understanding or to the intuitional consciousness, whether delivered to the mind by the immediate contact of the Divine Spirit or through the medium of a written word, that fact communicated to the soul must be regarded as an objective revelation, because coming from without. Men need other religious truth than that which exists in their nature,—truth coming to them from some outward source. This truth might indeed be found only in unwritten traditions and be delivered only through the human voice ; yet it would constitute an objective revelation. It is necessary, however, to the best preservation of revealed truth that it be written. Without the constant occurrence of a miracle, an unwritten Divine revelation could not have been preserved from corruption and partial extinction.

We deny that religious truth resides only in the intuitional consciousness. Why may it not reside also in the understanding ? The fact is that God's word is addressed to every portion of man's nature, intellectual and moral,—to his reason, understanding, conscience, and affections. Religion is designed to reach and pervade the whole soul of man. We know, however, that men's consciences and affections are often reached, influenced, and elevated by addresses made to their understandings ; and we know no reason why they may not be controlled and purified by an inspired word, even were it addressed exclusively or mainly to the logical faculty. Although the word of God is addressed to all man's faculties and feelings, it is nevertheless probable that truth originally delivered only to the understanding by means of a written revelation might be afterwards conveyed to every portion of the soul by the Holy Spirit, so as to produce the highest sanctification ; or even if the inspired truth itself remained in the understanding alone, its effects might permeate the entire soul.

We have thus far shown that Morell's theory of inspira-

tion is false, inasmuch as it denies the possibility of an objective revelation; and in doing so we have accomplished what we designed as preliminary to our argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures, to be derived from the truth of redemption. We will, however, digress so far from our main purpose as to present some further objections to Morell's theory of the "intuitional consciousness."

It is unreasonable to suppose, as Morell would lead us to think, that God requires us to believe only so much of his word as our minds, whether through the reason or the understanding, are able perfectly to understand and to verify. It is much more reasonable to suppose that a Divine revelation would contain many things altogether mysterious and many things entirely new. Faith must receive many Divine truths about whose existence reason can never determine. Reason may indeed reject a pretended Divine revelation which is palpably opposed to its intuitions; but there are many things disclosed in the word of God which are entirely beyond the range of human reason, so that it can neither contradict nor confirm them.

It is unreasonable to think, as Morell's theory requires us, that God has given to man a revelation full of imperfections and falsehoods. Such a revelation is unworthy of God. Besides, such a revelation would be inadequate to rectify the powers and purify the affections of the soul; man needs pure, undefiled truth with which to effect his moral recovery.

If Morell's theory is true, every man is left to construct a religion for himself; for the "intuitional faculty" leads no two men to agree with regard to a system of religious truth. We cannot suppose that God permits men to reject any portion of the Scriptures they may choose to think unworthy of revelation. It cannot be that men are justified in deriving from the Holy Scriptures faiths differing as widely from one another as paganism differs from the most perfect orthodoxy.

If all men may be inspired in the sense in which St. John and St. Paul were inspired, we may have new religious volumes as binding on our consciences as the Scriptures themselves; we may have a new religion; indeed, a new religion, equally authoritative as the Christian, may take its rise with each succeeding generation. Nor is that all. If the best men of modern times are inspired, the writings of Baxter, Leighton, Edwards, and Doddridge bind our consciences as authoritatively as the Bible.

Morell's theory is useless to us, because we are unable to determine what are the religious intuitions of men. We know not where to look for a statement of them. The writers of different ages and the different writers of the same age disagree with each other on this subject. If each man is left to himself to determine as to the nature of the intuitions, men's systems of faith must become almost infinitely diversified. We admit that there are intuitions as to which men universally agree: they are given as the starting-points of knowledge; but their number is limited, and they are not sufficient to furnish us any such religion as we need.

If it should be proved that the intuitional consciousness is the only proper arbiter of religious questions, we say that then it is able to pronounce on the question of inspiration; then it may decide whether the Scriptures are partially or entirely inspired, and whether they are wholly uninspired; and we say, further, that then it has decided in our favor. Shall it be said that this is *a question of fact*, that does not properly come *before the reason* for decision? We reply that the existence of the atonement is *a question of fact*, which Morell admits that the intuitional consciousness has settled. The brightened intuitional consciousness of the world, or the reason most fitted to receive religious truth, has been found among the eminently pious in the Christian church; and they have unanimously held that all the Scriptures are a revelation from God; or, in other words, they have believed in their plenary inspiration.

The understanding is a fit tribunal before which to try the question of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. It is fully competent to decide these two questions, whether the writers of the Scriptures claimed to be inspired, and whether they wrought miracles in attestation of the truth of their utterances. These writers declare that their writings and the Scriptures of the Old Testament were inspired, and they wrought miracles to prove what they said. This is a subject on which an intelligent jury may decide; and the two facts alluded to being proved, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is established.

If Morell's theory is true, we have no inspired word, no infallible rule of faith and practice, no competent guardian of morals, no sufficient light to lead us to heaven.

Many of the objections that have been urged against the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and which we regard as weighing equally against the whole of Christianity, have been answered in another part of this volume. Let us for our convenience notice here a few other objections of the same kind.

It has been said that palpable mistakes have been discovered in the Bible. We reply in general that what seem to be contradictions in narratives of the same events are not such, but are easily reconcilable after a little investigation and study. We do not deny that there are some verbal inaccuracies in our version of the Bible and in the originals from which it was translated. These errors have occurred in transcribing the holy oracles, and may be classed with the typographical. As the Hebrews and Greeks used letters for figures, where numbers are concerned mistakes in transcription are easily made. It is unreasonable to demand, as a condition of our receiving a revelation, that God's providence should so watch over his word as to prevent all verbal errors—even such as do not alter its general sense—from sliding into it. This we will say: God's providence has so watched and protected his written word that, often

as it has been transcribed, no error has ever crept into it sufficient to alter materially any important historical fact, or to change the sense of a single doctrine or of a single rule of practice: more than this God has not promised and it were unreasonable to expect.

It is idle to say that we ought not to regard the Bible as inspired, because it seems to us to contain many things unworthy of being revealed from heaven, or so unimportant in themselves as not to have needed inspiration in their deliverance. We are very indifferent judges as to what it was best for God to reveal; and we are not able to determine that anything which is made known in the Scriptures is unimportant. The very scriptural fact that seems to us most trivial may be necessary to the salvation of our neighbor,—may be even an indispensable link in the chain of evidence by which he is bound to a belief in revelation. What is unnecessary to the moral welfare of the men of the present age may have been indispensable to the spiritual illumination of men of past generations. Facts are recorded in the Scriptures from which men of preceding ages have derived little or no benefit, which are probably designed for the advantage of future generations of mankind. Some imagine that they could so prune the Bible as to improve it; but surely such a work has never been attempted with any degree of success. What portion of it is it, of which we would be willingly deprived? Not its moral precepts, for they are the most perfect which the human imagination could conceive or the human conscience contemplate; not its doctrinal parts, for they are the nutriment of our spiritual being; not its historical portions, for they are the delight of childhood and the comfort of age. Its theology, philosophy, and poetry, its histories and its prophecies, are all indispensable to us. It is worthy of notice that for the most part the men who have most violently rejected the idea of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures have not objected so much to their historical facts or ethical

teachings as to the doctrines they unfold in connection with the subject of human redemption; they have generally denied the reality of the atonement and the doctrine of justification by faith only, through the Redeemer's merits. Once induce a man to perceive the Divine origin of the plan of salvation, and to understand that plan in its fullness, and we feel confident that he will see the word of God so radiant throughout with evangelic truth that he will no longer doubt the inspiration of the whole of it.

It has been objected to the inspiration of the Scriptures, that the writers of them have different styles of composition, and retain and manifest their individuality in their varying styles. The critic can indeed easily distinguish the classic style of Luke from the Hebraic style of Matthew; in the gospel and epistles of John we discover a gentleness and a philosophic spirit which are peculiar to the man who wrote them; Paul, in almost every page that he has written, has given evidence of the logical character of mind which he certainly possessed; David, the sweet psalmist, writes with the enthusiasm of the poet, and in every sentence which he has written gives proof of a nature deeply emotional; Solomon has written like a man of extensive learning accustomed to profound reflection; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the prophets have each a style easily distinguishable from that of the others. It is thought by some, however, that God ought to have one unvarying style in which to speak to the beings to whom He reveals his will.

In reply to the objection just stated, it may be said that if it deserves any consideration at all it proves that none of the Scriptures are inspired, and that they fail to teach authoritatively even the doctrine of redemption; for that doctrine can be understood only by comparing together what several inspired writers of different styles have written. It is a more conclusive answer to this objection, that God has no peculiar language or style, and that from the necessity of the case some human language or languages must

be employed as the vehicle of a Divine revelation to man ; that it was expedient that a number of men should be employed as the instruments of communicating God's will to the human race ; and that it was evidently best to leave these men to write in the style most easy and natural to them.

The different styles of inspired writers prove the authenticity, and to a degree the genuineness, of the writings themselves ; and we know how important to the proof of the inspiration of these writings is the evidence which shows that they are authentic and genuine. Thus we see that God has permitted inspired men to use the language most natural to them, that He might furnish to men of all generations the proof that He has given a revelation to man.

The Bible is a much more intelligible book to men generally than it would have been if it had been written in one undeviating style. If that one style had been the very best possible to man, it would have suited a large number of minds less than some other style that might have been adopted. Some need for their instruction an argument ; others need a mere statement ; while to some minds nothing is impressive which is not conveyed to them in the language of poetry. In our sacred Scriptures every reader will find Divine truth, of the highest importance, uttered to him in the very connection and the very language which are best adapted to the peculiarities of his mental constitution.

A variety of styles of composition is delightful to every reader ; and the Bible derives much of its charm from this variety. In some moods of mind we wish to read the simple and beautiful narratives of the Pentateuch ; at other times we delight to contemplate the sublime imagery of the book of Job, or to wander amid pastoral scenes with the sweet singer of Israel, or to soar with Isaiah, or to weep with Jeremiah, or to be wrapped in gloomy grandeur with Ezekiel and Habakkuk. At one time our minds are prepared to follow the close and complicated reasoning of Paul ; and at

another time they are ready to receive the fervid exhortations of Peter and James. God has given a variety to the Scriptures, as He has to nature around us, which is not one extended grassy plain, but which presents to our vision—here a grain-covered field and there a green forest, on one side a valley and on another side a hill, in one direction variegated dry land and in another direction an expanse of water. It is not reasonable to object that God has made his word, as He has made nature, varied and beautiful for the enjoyment of his creatures. Over hill and valley and streamlet, over all the earth far as the eye can reach, He diffuses the sweet sunlight; and over all the variegated pages of his written word He has poured the more benign effulgence of redemption.

Note to the foregoing Chapter.—It is an interesting question whether the Bible contains all the inspired books, and no others. No question has been more satisfactorily answered. Our limits do not allow us to discuss at large the subject of the canon of the Scriptures; but we affirm that any man who will trouble himself to make the investigation will find the most ample authority for receiving all the books, and those only, which Protestant churches receive, as inspired. The genuineness of writings can be determined only by the testimony of men who have lived near the time at which they were written. Thus we know that Cicero wrote *De Senectute* and that Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*. The genuineness of any of the received writings of Cicero and of any author of antiquity, or of Milton and any of the English authors of the seventeenth century, is not established on better authority than that which supports the genuineness of the whole Bible. As to the canon of the Old Testament, the evidence is ample that it embraces all, and only, the inspired books that were written before the time of Christ. The Saviour and his apostles recognized the Jewish canon, as it existed in their time, as perfect and complete. Had any other than genuine books of inspiration been introduced into it, they would have exposed and denounced the fraud. We know also that the Jewish canon, in the time of Christ and his apostles, was identical with our Old Testament Scriptures. We know it from the testimony of Jewish writers who lived about the same time, the most

conspicuous of whom is Josephus; from the testimony of early Christian writers; from the testimony of the Jews of all ages, among whom there has been no diversity of opinion on this subject. Whenever the writings of the New Testament may have been collected, we know that they were *all* written and *all* recognized as inspired at a very early period of the church. The very earliest Christian fathers, some of whom were the contemporaries of the apostles, make reference to or quote nearly all the books that are contained in the New Testament. Writers immediately succeeding them, as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, allude to nearly all the parts of the New Testament, and to some to which the fathers of the first century have not referred. In the writers of the third and fourth centuries are found catalogues of the books of the New Testament, nearly all of which precisely correspond with our canon. Jerome, at an early period, made a version of the New Testament, which contained all the books which we recognize as genuine, and none besides. We trust that we have said enough to show the manner in which the genuineness of the writings of the Old and New Testaments may be ascertained; and for further information we must refer the reader to those works which have been expressly and elaborately written on the canon of the Scriptures.

Have the Scriptures been corrupted in the lapse of ages? Some have pretended to believe that they have been so altered that we cannot regard them with the reverence which we would feel for them if they had come fresh from the hand of God. No book has been so little altered in its transmission from generation to generation as the Bible. Literal errors and some interpolations have been made in it; but these, besides being easily detected, are of no real importance. That the Jewish Scriptures have not been corrupted we know from the vigilance with which the Jews watched over them; from the correspondence of the different versions of them with the original; from the implied testimony of Christ and his apostles; and from the testimony of Christian writers from the earliest period of the church. Christians and Jews have had identically the same Hebrew Scriptures ever since the origin of Christianity. We know also that the Scriptures of the New Testament have not been corrupted. If they have been corrupted at all, no man can tell when, how, or where. History furnishes no evidence of any material alteration of them. On the other hand, we know from the abundant quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the early fathers of the church, that the sacred text has maintained its integrity. The same facts and truths which we derive from all the Scriptures were also derived from them by the Christian writers of the first four centuries. There have

existed from the beginning of the Christian era different religious sects or parties in the church, all appealing to the Scriptures as the arbiter of their peculiar opinions, who have watched over the sacred record to preserve it from corruption, and who would have reported and condemned any mutilation of it. Christians at an early period became scattered over the earth, carrying with them copies of the Scriptures, which could not have been altered all in the same way. Translations of the New Testament were early made into different languages. Manuscripts of the New Testament have been found, which date back to within a few centuries of the time at which its books were first written. All these copies, versions, and manuscripts, brought from different parts of the earth, substantially agree,—a thing impossible on the hypothesis that the sacred text has been corrupted. The unity and coherency of the Scriptures also prove to us that they have undergone no material alteration.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES PROVED BY THE TRUTH OF REDEMPTION.

WE proceed now to show in what manner the truth of redemption proves the inspiration of the Scriptures. Our argument on this subject shall be simple and brief.

If redemption be Divine, Christ the Redeemer must be a person of undeviating integrity, so that everything that He has uttered must be infallibly true. Now, Christ has most distinctly affirmed the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is true also that He promised the gift of inspiration to his chosen disciples, and gave an intimation that the same gift would be imparted to other ministers in the early church. Redemption proves the veracity of Christ; Christ's veracity proves the inspiration of the Scriptures.

If redemption be Divine, the veracity of Christ's apostles and of other writers of the New Testament must be regarded

as unimpeachable; for they were chosen to unfold to the world the doctrine of redemption, and it is reasonable to suppose that Christ would choose for such a purpose only men of sound intelligence and lofty virtue, whose testimony on any subject would be worthy of credence. It is altogether unreasonable to think that God has employed, to communicate the most sacred and important truth ever revealed to the world, a set of men who are not credible witnesses on every subject on which they have testified, and who cannot be trusted as to what they affirm of the extent to which they have been inspired. The writers of the New Testament have declared that they were inspired to write all that they have written, and their testimony in the case must be accepted as conclusive.

So large a portion of the Scriptures has a connection with the scheme of redemption, that if we concede the Divine authority of any of it we must believe that the entire volume is inspired. From the first chapter of Genesis to the last verse in the Apocalypse, we find facts and truths having a direct bearing on the great question of human salvation. It is almost impossible for us to determine what portion of the holy record has not a bearing on that question. In the New Testament every chapter is employed either in stating the momentous doctrine of redemption, or in proving its Divine source and power, or in exhibiting its effects, or in inculcating the moral duties which it implies. In the writings of the Old Testament also Christ is everywhere visible. Prophecies in regard to Him pervade the book,—prophecies of whose inspiration no reasonable man can entertain a doubt, which have proved their Divine source by their minute fulfillment. It is natural to think that God, designing human redemption, would inspire men to foretell the fact, and that He would not permit predictions to be made with respect to it about whose accuracy and inspiration there could exist any reasonable doubt. If the prophecies of the Old Testament with regard to Christ

are inspired, the different books that contain them must be received as inspired throughout; because we know that the men who wrote them were moved by the Holy Ghost. These books, let it be remembered, constitute by far the largest portion of the Jewish Scriptures. The moral law as revealed by Moses proves its own inspiration; it also has a close and intimate connection with redemption, is introductory to it, and on that account must be received as inspired. The Levitical law—the ceremonial law of the Jews—is manifestly typical and prophetic of the gospel, is in fact the gospel, only in disguise; and for that reason its inspiration ought not to be doubted. The history contained in the Jewish Scriptures was necessary to the disclosure of redemption. It was necessary that the relationship of the first man to his posterity, and an account of his fall, should be recorded, that men might perceive the necessity of an atonement and understand the relationship sustained to us by the Redeemer. A large portion of the Jewish Scriptures has respect to the genealogy of the Saviour, which it was necessary to preserve distinctly, in order to show that He was a lineal descendant of Adam, and that He might be identified in various ways, at his coming, as the true Messiah. If the books referred to were necessarily in part inspired, that the fulfillment of the prophecies with respect to the Messiah might be clear, must we not conclude that they were wholly inspired? Shall we adopt the opinion that the writers were inspired to write a portion of these books, and uninspired when they wrote the rest of them? To prove that any portion of the historic books is uninspired were to throw a doubt on the inspiration of the whole of them. Here let us say that it is generally supposed that the writings of the Old Testament were necessary to impress the idea of redemption on the minds of men of earlier generations, but that they are unnecessary for that purpose so far as we of this age are concerned. It is probable, however, that the Jewish Scriptures are indispensable to the

perfect unfolding of the scheme of redemption, even at the present day.

Redemption is certainly made known in our sacred Scriptures, and uninspired men could not have revealed it. We cannot believe that God would permit false opinions and untrue history to be mingled with his pure revelation,—to exist side by side with a revealed fact of the very highest importance, in a volume which He has designed for the illumination and salvation of the world. Error and folly would receive from such an alliance a dignity and plausibility with which infinite truth and wisdom would not permit them to be invested; while the plan of mercy would lose a portion, if not of its sanctity, at least of its respectability in the sight of men.

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